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THE KEY

TO THE MYSTERY.

BY EDWARD RICHIE.

AND GILLIES



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II.

THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY.

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THE
KEY TO THE MYSTERY;
OR,
THE BOOK OF REVELATION TRANSLATED.

BY EDWARD RICHER,
OF NANTES.

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PREFACE.

THE following work contains a familiar exposition of the explanation, or rather translation, of the emblematic language of the Apocalypse, first promulgated by Imanuel Swedenborg. The source from which Swedenborg derived this knowledge was that of vision, or extasis, or clairvoyance—in short, communication with the Spiritual World. St John asserts that he was in this state when he beheld the scenes which he has described in the Book of Revelation; and it therefore seems natural that one who, like him, enjoyed this closer communication with the Almighty and His angelic ministers, should be best fitted to convey the meaning of these emblematic pictures to us. Swedenborg's interpretation will surely arrest the attention of some of the multitudes whose thoughts are at present turned to this obscure book, if only by what they will call the *ingenuity* of the author, and the striking parallel which he draws between the emblems employed by St John and those of the Old Testament prophets.

It has been asked by some of the critics who noticed the first volume of the *Spiritual Library*, why this series was undertaken—why was it endeavoured, as they expressed it, to disturb the faith of the Christian world in

the received explanations of the Bible, and substitute for these a spiritual meaning which the great majority might be unable to comprehend? In reply, we say that the object of this series being issued was NOT TO DISTURB A SETTLED FAITH, BUT TO BRING BACK ONE WHICH HAD DEPARTED. These gentlemen may imagine, looking only to their own locality or their own congregation, that the old belief in creeds and articles of faith still survives ; but it is notorious to those who take a more comprehensive view, that INFIDELITY is all but universal. It may be concealed here beneath the mantle of *hypocrisy*; it may be draped there in the garments of *rationalism*; but the fact remains, that ~~the~~ great mass of mankind do not understand or believe the Word of God. If the cause of this infidelity be probed, it will be found, in the great majority of instances, to be owing to the interpretations of the Scriptures given by those who look only to the *literal meaning*—forgetting that “The *letter* killeth, but the *spirit* maketh alive”—and in this way raise up an insurmountable barrier between free inquiry and religious belief. This series is, therefore, dedicated, above all, to the DISSATISFIED and INQUIRING ; and it is earnestly hoped that it may assist in bringing them back to a firm belief in the promises of God, and a living faith in that FUTURE LIFE which we are taught to look forward to in the pages of His Word.

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THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY.

CHAPTER I.

THE INDICATION OF THE MYSTERY.

My friend Eugene possesses one of the largest and most complete libraries in the capital. It has become a rendezvous for literary men and *savants*, and a visitor rarely fails to meet in his house with laborious students equally anxious to aid others with their advice, and to explore for themselves the rich mine there presented to their curiosity. I had formed the habit, since my arrival, of passing several hours there every day. I had left the provinces with the intention of seeking in Paris for universal, absolute truth. My friends laughed at my insanity, and, smiling in my turn at theirs, I pored over these old books from morning till night, books which are now never read, and which, nevertheless, have said all that is presented to us in the present day as new. A craving desire for truth tormented me unceasingly. I felt myself born for it, and yet nothing up till the present moment had ever appeared to me so evident, that I could say, *there* is the whole truth. It was my intention to write an impartial history of the progress and the errors of the human mind, imagining that a simple summing up of each would decide the whole question, as the amount of progress would plainly furnish the faithful expression of the truth. Following out this happy idea, I had examined all the authors contained in my friend's library, from Aristotle and Plato to Buffon and Bernardin de Saint Pierre, and, in order to complete my work, I had now only to indicate the line of demarcation which separates truth from error. Imagining that I had merely occupation enough left for a few hours of solitary study, I went to take

leave of Eugene, whose voluminous library would henceforth be useless to me.

I found him that day entirely absorbed in reading. As I approached him gently, he perceived me, and pointing with his finger to the page where he had stopped, I read this question of Pilate's to Jesus Christ—*What is truth?* With almost the pedantic confidence of a young scholar fresh from college, I was about to tell him that I had it in my pocket, and was just preparing to produce my manuscript, when he said to me bitterly—You see this Bible without commentary, this text without explanation—behold to what I am reduced at present! Interpreters have nearly turned my brain. I have found in this book so many contradictory statements, that I have decided, at the risk of erring like my guides, to read it without predilection for any system. But I admit it is a heavy task. I never imagined that truth could be enveloped in so many clouds. I really believe that if I proceed farther, my reason itself will run great risk of shipwreck. See, continued he, giving his hand affectionately to a friend beside him, who appeared to be an ecclesiastic, this gentleman is not thus embarrassed; the Pope has taken charge of his belief, and his mind reposes tranquilly on the decisions of Authority. Which proves to you clearly, said the stranger, the truth of our religion. The most common, and at the same time the most innocent, of errors, is to imagine that moral truth strikes the eyes of the intellect with the same force that the light of the sun penetrates the eyes of the body. Our senses cannot withdraw themselves from the influence of material objects, but our soul, by the abuse of its liberty, is continually false to its own real sentiments! It changes good into evil, truth into falsehood, and gives to sophism the aspect of sincerity! Read the books of men, and you will only discover the humiliating confession of their weakness. Every writer is persuaded that truth has not yet appeared upon the earth. It is his book alone which is to make it known; till his day every generation has been nursed with chimeras. And do you believe that this book, which is to enlighten the human race, is the sincere expression of the author's inmost thoughts? By no means—most frequently it is the trash which a plagiarist has compiled to spare himself the trouble of reflection, or a paradox sustained by a man of talent for the mere purpose of rendering himself singular, or of creating for himself a name. Be assured that if the author has accidentally stumbled on a truth which refutes this paradox, he has taken care to conceal it, and that, so far from proclaiming it aloud, he has introduced into his system all the arguments best calculated to destroy it.

EUGENE.—But, M. l'Abbé, yours is a desperate system too;

according to it, there is not the least hope that man can ever arrive at the truth.

THE ABBÉ.—You have said it. Without religion, it is quite as impossible for a man to find the truth by himself, as to practise good. Absolute truth and good have their source in God alone. From the imagination of man, when abandoned to himself, can only proceed vague thoughts, just as the heart only gives birth to uncertain resolutions. We have no fixed measure except with regard to things which concern ourselves: those which interest the human race are quite indifferent to us, whatever we may say to the contrary. Man is born in the most utter selfishness. Without religion, which reforms this debasing propensity, you see plainly that he would be all his life at war with his neighbours and himself. For the same reason he is born in total ignorance, and if religion does not instruct him as to what he ought to believe and think, he will consult his passions alone; and how can you expect that truth should make itself heard when the passions are aroused? We must, first of all, stifle these—we must annihilate pride, vanity; in a word, *self*; and it is precisely this principle of selfishness alone which has guided the pen of every author since old Homer——

Until you, my friend, said Eugene, interrupting the Abbé: then, turning towards me: Come, said he, lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me frankly if this gentleman has not told the truth.

It is impossible, I replied, to describe the evil better. I feel plainly that it is mere folly to seek for the truth apart from God; but I do not at all understand how he pretends to arrive at it by submitting to the decision of the Pope and the Councils. Popes and bishops have, no doubt, much of the light of intellect; but, after all, they are mere men, and you have just told me that self-deception lurks in the very essence of human nature.

THE ABBÉ.—Nor do I appeal to the light of the human intellect, whatever be the dignity with which it is clothed; I simply place my confidence in this man, in so far as he is the depositary of the promises of Jesus Christ. To put an end to all our stumblings in darkness, Jesus Christ came to instruct us in person, and has left behind him a Vicar who instructs us like himself. I find nothing in that which is not very natural. He has said to this Vicar that he would be with him till the end of the world; thus, when the Pope, the bishop appointed by him, and the priest ordained by the bishop, speak to me in the name of Jesus Christ, I must believe that they are the organs of the God who has promised to remain with them. In this manner, authority puts a bridle on the licence of private opinion, which otherwise would

be constantly interrupted by these stumbling-blocks which encumber the road to human knowledge. Little minds laugh at our venerable faith, but you see plainly that, even by your own confession, these minds are at sea without a compass. You acknowledge that man, by himself, is incapable of reaching to the light—is it not better, therefore, to take advantage of the unflickering torch of the Romish faith, than to search painfully for the little deceptive lamps which flicker here and there for a brief period, and which the succeeding age invariably extinguishes? You may tell me that genius alone should have the privilege of enlightening us: be it so; but there is no one who believes himself devoid of genius, and at that rate, the most pernicious error might put itself prominently forward. I do not believe in the least in the infallibility of talent, nor, I am convinced, do you either; if there be infallibility anywhere, or, in other terms, if there be the seal of God anywhere, it ought to be there, where God has told us that he would remain. To seek him in our academic assemblages would be mere credulity—I prefer recognising him in the infallible promise made by the Gospel. You may seek for truth all your life with the aid of your own intellect, and you will find only probabilities; but if, on the contrary, you trust to the intellect into which the Holy Spirit has promised to descend, you are at once relieved of a great burden. Like Atlas, you formerly endeavoured to carry the weight of the world upon your shoulders, and you were crushed by it; with the Romish faith, you leave this burden to him who alone can carry it, all your uncertainties vanish, and, henceforth sure of the truth, you have nothing to hinder you from practising it, and from converting your speculative belief into a life of charity. Observe, sir, whither this undoubting faith, at which the incredulous laugh, conducts us. The latter consume their whole existence in painful and dubious searches after truth, or in idle meditation; while, on the other hand, we do not need to search, the inquiry which was necessary has been already made, and our meditations, which confirm it, do not hinder us from devoting our lives to useful objects. Even were such a system not to be found in the Gospel, we must regard the inventor of it as the most profound and philosophic genius of the human race. With it, the law is always living. Without it, it is the majority who make the law; and in how many cases are not the majority in error?

MYSELF.—A theocratic government under a single head, who holds his mandate from God himself, may have certain advantages as regards its internal administration, provided that this mandate be fully proved. But that is not the question at present. We were talking of the Bible. Mr Eugene reads it without interpretation, for fear of taking chimeras for truths; his

reason, abandoned to itself, sees little there clearly; you, in your turn, tell us to repose upon the Romish tradition, which preserves everything, but which explains nothing. I do not believe in the least that God has given us a book in which we shall never see anything but enigmas, and that, to set us at ease, he has told us to appeal to the decision of the Pope.

THE ABBÉ.—You do not believe, you say, that God has given us a book in which our private judgment can never guide us without stumbling; but, my dear sir, he has assuredly given us the great book of Nature, where this same reason stumbles at every step. Believe me, God did not take counsel of your reason, either when he made the world, or when he inspired the Bible. As you are obliged to recognise your inability to explain the phenomena of nature, why should you have less difficulty in making this acknowledgment, when the question concerns the spiritual world? You see clearly that, if you refer to the opinion of isolated individuals on these matters, you will have as many opinions as there are men; and, as truth ought to be one, the surest means of attaining it is to attach one's self to the universal opinion. You say that it preserves, and does not explain. Leave the matter in the hands of God—when he pleases, he raises up the men who are to preserve, and those who are to explain. It is his book, and he is at liberty to reserve its interpretation for times and circumstances with which he alone is acquainted. With absolute liberty of examination and complete independence of faith, you will have a hundred times more enigmas to solve than there are at present in the literal text of the holy book. Enthusiastic minds bring forth thousands of systems, each more incomprehensible than the other. The visions of Isaiah and the other prophets of the Old Testament are quite sufficient for me, without disturbing my faith by those of modern ecstasies. I am content with reading the epistles of St Paul, without imagining that it is necessary to add to these moral precepts the incomprehensible metaphysics of St Martin, or the obscure sublimity of Jacob Boehme. Is there nothing in the writings of those who have claimed to be inspired that is without a cloud? If there must be obscurity, I prefer the obscurity of the Scriptures to that of men. Glance for a moment at the opinions which pass current in the world, and you will see that almost all are built on theories more marvellous than those which serve as the foundation of the Romish faith. Assuredly, the power which endows the torpedo with its electricity, the bee with its social instinct, the ant with its foresight, is a hundred times more miraculous than that power which has its seat in the human soul, and acts through the latter by means the most simple. Do we not say every day that man is a recipient of the divine love and wisdom? Well!

what difficulty is there in believing that Providence deigns to govern and enlighten the human race by means of such a recipient? Now, the Pope is nothing more; he is the agent of a spiritual power which descends on him, without his own active participation. As the successor of St Peter, he is, like him, the delegate of Jesus Christ; and wherefore should not Jesus Christ employ, for the direction of man, the most simple and natural means, those which we see employed every day in society? The divine intentions cannot, I think, be made known except by the mouth of a man; it is the law of this world; and, unless we had angels descending expressly from heaven to bring us spiritual light, I conceive that it can only come from him with whom Jesus Christ has promised to remain till the consummation of all things. Remove this land-mark, and all is abandoned to disorder and confusion. There will be as many sacred books as there are minds; consequently, as many religions. For fear of recognising the Romish Church as the most reasonable system of the divine action on society, you will madly embark upon the stormy sea of human opinions. You will never know what we ought to think, what we ought to believe, and consequently what we ought to do.

As he concluded, the Abbé took his breviary, which he had laid for a moment upon the table, and left the room. Eugene looked at me with a smile: Confess, said he, that this system is a very seducing one. How well it supplies the insufficiency of reason! Here I am occupied in searching quite alone for truth in the Bible; and even if I should succeed, after thirty years of study, in connecting a few passages of Scripture together, so as to give them a precise meaning, no sooner have I finished, than another, more learned than I, will demonstrate to me as clear as day that my system is totally devoid of common sense. I shall die just as ignorant as I was born. These good ultramontanists, on the other hand, have no such cause for embarrassment; they say to themselves—My Bible is approved at Rome, that is all I desire; God will not accense me of error at the last day. If I deceive myself, the fault is not mine. Then they have an argument always ready to meet those who, not seeing as they do, tax them with weakness. What I believe, they tell us, has been believed by thousands of men at least your equals in intellect—what I believe has been always received by the great mass of the community; if I err, it is in company with the entire human race—it is in believing the promises of the Saviour himself. There is no declivity more gentle than this, and, in truth, we are strongly tempted to allow ourselves to glide down it.

Take care, exclaimed at this moment the editor of a Protestant journal, who had overheard us. You only look at the

matter in one point of view; the pretensions of the ultramontanists have no foundation in Scripture. If Jesus Christ has said, I shall be with you even to the end of the world, the promise is made to those who teach his precepts, to whatever body they may belong. The first pastors were elected by the people; and this right of election, by conferring upon them the privilege of imparting instruction, rendered them the mediators between God and man. To recognise the decisions of any individual as absolute truths, from which there is no appeal, is monstrous. If this man is mistaken, is not the entire human race led into error by his fault? But he cannot err, it is said—he is infallible; I do not believe a word of it. History has given only too many contradictions to the infallibility of the Holy See. It never was the intention of the Deity to submit the united intellect of the whole human race to the judgment of a single man. To establish this law as divine, would be to contradict the laws promulgated by supreme wisdom. In the moral world, the kingdom belongs to God alone. He alone it is whom we are to recognise. He has given us his Word to instruct us, as he has given us his sun to light up our system. The sun is reflected in one manner in one body, in a different manner in another; and, far from this causing any inconvenience, this difference in the receptacles produces the variety of colours in the universe. It is thus with the Word as it is felt and interpreted in the mind of each of us; it is reflected there in a thousand ways, all of which tend to the greater glory of God. If you attempt to reduce the divine words to a single interpretation, it would be as if you wished us all to experience the same impression from everything we feel, and this is a pretension which shocks common sense. Every one feels and comprehends God in his own manner with respect to his works; how then can we do otherwise as regards his divine Word, which is the manifestation of God himself? A claim to the exclusive interpretation of Scripture is a tyranny inflicted on the intellect; nay, when erected into a religious dogma, it is an insupportable tyranny, which weighs on the whole social order. *The Son by his truth hath made us free*; let us not, therefore, be ensnared by the false systems of men.

EUGENE.—All that is very well if you suppose man illumined by light from above, and capable of receiving it pure and without alloy; but if he be born in evil and falsehood, as a Romish theologian just now told us, you cannot deny that he has need of light from above to supply his natural incapacity.

THE JOURNALIST.—Undoubtedly; but this light is the Word itself; men here have no right to interfere. I agree with your theologian respecting the fall of man, without which

there can be no Christianity ; and it is precisely for this reason that I distrust man, who is always inclined to selfishness or pride. The Pope is no more exempt from these failings than another ; the infallibility of which he boasts is the lot of every one of us. But when we are convinced that we are saved by faith alone, and that good works themselves do not contribute in the least to our salvation——

EUGENE.—What ! do you maintain that seriously ?

THE JOURNALIST.—It is the only means of escaping from that perplexity of human opinions for which just now you could find no remedy but the decisions of the Vatican, and faith in the traditions of the Church. You must observe that your means is purely human, and that ours is based on the certain knowledge of the divine and human laws. In fact, if man come into the world in absolute ignorance of everything, is it not clear that, instead of seeking to penetrate into inscrutable mysteries which always escape his search, there is no other expedient but to believe that Jesus Christ has come to redeem him from his sins ? Believing this point of doctrine, without seeking farther, he will acknowledge his former prevarication and his present weakness. That, I hope, is the solution of the enigma. On the other hand, in forbidding him to reckon on good works as a means of salvation, religion has sounded the human heart to the bottom. If you do good merely in order to go to heaven, this good is degraded by the motive, since it is self-interest alone which leads to it. If it be not done in the prospect of future recompence, there is strong reason to fear that you recompense yourself for it in private by inwardly enjoying what you have accomplished. In that case you introduce self into your actions ; and this self, which usurps the place of God, is a corrupt principle. You see clearly that our principle of faith alone, and of salvation independent of good works, is founded upon a solid basis. Theological subtleties and philosophical extravagance can never shake the truth. In despair of finding the truth, the Roman Catholics have said—Let us abandon our reason, and believe in that of the Pope. We, on the contrary, say—Away with systems and interpretations, and let us be content with the belief that we are saved and redeemed by Jesus Christ ; thus we permit the Divine nature to act in us as it pleases, and we are sure of being in the right path. Our adversaries, in making good works a condition of salvation, convert devotion into a sort of selfish exchange ; we, on the other hand, regard them as merely civil and moral duties, and our religion, being entirely disinterested, takes no part in actions which have so often dissimulation for their means, and our own selfish interests for their object. You see, then, that this sublime economy of our religion, which consists in substituting faith alone, faith pure

and undefiled, for the variable traditions of men, is founded on the most profound knowledge and the deepest study.

EUGENE.—But you must acknowledge that this universal agreement has at least something imposing in it.

THE JOURNALIST.—What agreement? It is said to be universal, and five-sixths of the human race have never even heard of the Councils. This same tradition is said to have existed for nineteen centuries; but granting that, what is an existence of nineteen centuries in comparison with that of the divine works? The Mohammedans might say in the same manner—See, our religion is thirteen hundred years old, and the Christians have just the advantage over us that the number nineteen has over the number thirteen; that is, six units more. What folly! We are told that this faith is unanimous; and, when we reckon up the exceptions, we find that they are infinitely more numerous than the pretended general rule. Without reckoning the Gnostics of the early ages of the Church, without speaking of the Greek and Reformed Churches, which number more followers than the Church of Rome, I find, even among the most zealous defenders of Christianity, persons who do not acknowledge this unanimous faith. In the works of Faustus, Origen, and Tertullian, you find something, even in the time of the primitive Church, which smacks of heresy. What becomes, then, of this so-called unanimity? Roman Catholics say that their faith cannot change, because the Spirit of God is with them. The Spirit of God was, to say the least, equally with the Jewish Church; yet see how it degenerated! It is the nature of human affairs to be always changing. To believe them fixed and immutable, is the dream of inexperience. Believe me, my friends, the Church of Rome had fallen far from its primitive condition when the Reformation came to enlighten the human race. A religion as liberal as ours was necessary to liberate the nations from slavery. It was, indeed, a noble means of avoiding error—that which was then in vogue—viz., to deprive the people of the Word of God! Lest men might err in its interpretation, they took away from them the Book which contains all knowledge. In truth, had it been in the power of man to withdraw from us the light of the sun, I believe they would have done so to prevent us from stumbling and falling. Let us thank that religion which has placed the Holy Scriptures in the hands of the faithful. By these means, it has given them the true nourishment of the Spirit—love and truth—which are in it alone, and which can exist nowhere else. The Reformation has thus taken the first step toward the liberation of the human race.

As he concluded these words, the journalist moved away to the other end of the library, to finish the article which he had already commenced for the journal of which he was the editor.

Here I am, said I to Eugene, in the same perplexity as Henry IV. after hearing two lawyers plead on opposite sides of a cause. I do not know how I am to solve the problem. Had these two men remained here, face to face, to reply to our questions, we might have come to some conclusion; but no, each of them has gone in his own direction, and here we are left alone to reconcile two doctrines so totally different.

EUGENE.—They have only done in our presence what the two communions do every day in the world; they write and preach each for his own party, but they have never yet made any attempt to procure as umpire an impartial man who is a stranger to their respective creeds. The mass of the human race is this umpire, and one day they will decide the question.

MYSELF.—No doubt they will decide one day, as they have already done on all human doctrines, by allowing ages to elapse between the discussion of the doctrines and the verdict given by the tribunal. But, my dear friend, our life is too short for this plan. As I shall not be alive ten centuries hence to read the history of the present time, and as I have only one motive, viz., to arrive at the truth, I do not wish to leave this spot without knowing something certain on the point.

EUGENE.—You would make the most phlegmatic man on earth laugh. Do you imagine that truth is so easily discovered? You believe that, having entered my house with certain doubts, you can carry certainty away with you! Oh! my dear friend, you are nothing the older notwithstanding your years. You artlessly believe in truth, as a child believes in the justice of a magistrate, the virtue of a pontiff, or the honour of a monarch. It is long since I have abandoned such fables; this is the romance of man, not his history. We are fated to err; and notwithstanding all the efforts of philosophers and theologians, we can find nothing but probabilities—we shall never possess the truth. However, since you require a mediating system, and since you wish for an umpire between the two advocates whom you have just heard, I see from where I sit a person whom I believe very capable of satisfying you on this point.

Saying these words, Eugene led me into one of the quiet nooks of the library, where I perceived a man of about thirty years of age, wearing a military dress, and occupied in copying notes from a Latin work, which appeared to have been printed many years ago, so far as I could judge by the enormous bulk of the book, and the time-stained colour of the parchment. Folio volumes are seldom written or read in our days. I approached this man, whose studies presented such a singular contrast with his age and profession, with a certain feeling of respect. I bring you a poor young man, said Eugene, ad-

dressing him, who, I do not know how, has nourished the dream that truth is to be found in the works or in the conversations of the learned; and he was hoping, I fancy, to carry it away bodily from my library, when he accidentally encountered an ultramontanist Abbé, who told him to consult the Pope on the subject. He was just beginning to waver, when a Protestant advised him to hold to simple faith in the merits of Christ, and to take no account of theological extravaganees. I thought that you might be able to assist him in his embarrassment, and I therefore take the liberty of introducing him to you.

After this somewhat abrupt introduction, Eugene brought chairs, seated me on the right of the officer, and, placing himself at his left, disposed himself to lend an attentive ear to the words of the umpire whom he had chosen. The officer closed the volume of St Thomas, which was open before him, and, after the compliments usual in such cases, he began:—

THE OFFICER.—Both the Ultramontanist and the so-called Reformed System enslave the human mind, by placing it under an insupportable yoke. Both destroy the liberty of man; and since free-will rejects them, they are false. Can you imagine anything more opposed to nature than to submit the opinions of men, that is to say, all that is most free and spontaneous in them, to the opinion of an individual? It is not the will of nature that our sentiments should form a homogeneous mass. In the material world, objects are varied too markedly for us to doubt that the same arrangement presides in the moral. Man is endowed with two faculties, love and intellect. The latter is destined to guide the former. From its very nature, love is blind; it must be enlightened as to the affections which are lawful, before it can act in a legitimate direction. But in the Romish religion you make no use of your own understanding. It is the understanding of the Popes or the suffrages of the Councils which is the measure of yours as it is of all Christians. This is contrary to order. If I wish to bring any one to my opinion, I do not force it upon him; his unconquerable free-will would make him reject it immediately. I place the thing before his eyes in the light of evidence, and it is then that he decides whether he will reject or adopt it.

MYSELF.—But the affections or the ruling passion of every one often render him inaccessible to evidence. It appears to me, then, that it is necessary, first of all, to subjugate the affections.

THE OFFICER.—But this operation cannot take place without the assistance of the understanding. Love, from its very nature, is free; what we love we desire; and in the will lies all the liberty of man. If I be permitted to change my love myself, I can accomplish it; but if you attempt to extirpate it

by force from my heart, I instinctively rebel against you, and I press it, as it were, to my bosom more firmly than before. I wish to be well advised, but not changed without my consent and participation. My intellect must say to my affections—You have mistaken the road, the other way is the right one. And the heart then yields. When man brings himself to obey his reason, he obeys without losing his liberty; but if he is constrained by the reason of another, the law which subjects him does not obtain his inward approbation, and the reform of his inclinations does not take place.

“Drive away nature, it returns at a gallop,”

says La Fontaine. We must, therefore, so arrange it, that man himself shall drive it away. For this purpose you must make his understanding his guide, his mentor. There is nothing so free as the conscience. The Romish communion, by excluding everything foreign to itself, enslaves our liberty by prohibiting us from thinking on religious matters otherwise than as it dictates. In a moral point of view, this pretension is inadmissible. Poor man! to what are you reduced? God has given you a mind and a heart to consider in its true point of view everything that exists in the universe. Things appear dim and obscure if these two faculties are not united in you; but in religion, where this concord is most useful, you are told to separate them, and are thus as completely prevented from making use of your mind as if you had never received from the Creator the faculties of thought, perception, and comprehension. I am at a loss to imagine a more tyrannical pretension; and upon what, pray, is it based? Upon two or three passages of Scripture taken in their literal sense; though it is very well known that the Bible has another and a different sense, and that, were we obliged to interpret it all in a strictly literal manner, we should find it full of absurdities and contradictions. Who does not know that we are not really to pluck out the right eye if it be an object of scandal? This precept is not taken literally; we are permitted to interpret it in a rational manner. But, notwithstanding, the promise made to Peter, and the power of loosing and binding, receive a literal interpretation, because the successors of St Peter use them as a prop for their authority. Really this is treating the sacred book as the savages do their fetishes. They invoke it or put it aside according as the precepts of their religion favour or oppose their tastes. Where is the rule which guides the ultramontanist in the explanation of Scripture? It must be taken either literally or in a spiritual sense. If the first mode be followed, a host of revolting precepts will be the result. If we follow the allegorical sense, Peter ceases to bind and loose; the apostle is then simply the emblem of truth. In saying to him, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (Petron) I shall build my

Church, our Lord really said, Thou art a receptacle of Faith, of Truth, and it is upon this Truth that my Church shall be founded. The Roman Catholics have no valid reasons for refusing my interpretation; if they say, It is a far-fetched allegorical explanation, I reply, with St Paul, The letter kills, but the Spirit maketh alive.

EUGENE.—We can readily enough believe that those who yield to one man, or to any body of men, the province of individual reason, how fragile soever the latter may be, will assuredly not agree with us, precisely because this fragility may be found on both sides; but what do you say of the Reformed Church?

THE OFFICER.—St Paul, whom I have just quoted, told the Hebrews to place the new faith above the works of the old law, which was henceforth useless; and erroneously applying this precept to our religion, in which faith and charity are inseparable, the Reformed Church has concluded that it is only necessary to attach themselves to the first, and neglect the second. You must confess that this is a serious error. The spirit of opposition alone could lead to the adoption of so unsound a principle. The most simple argument is sufficient to make the want in the Reformed system apparent. Faith is acquired by the exercise of the understanding, as charity by the exercise of love. Holding to faith alone, and neglecting charity, is absolutely the same as stopping at the thought of anything, without proceeding to its execution. Thought, faith, and understanding have always an end, which is action. If you remove the latter, you miss everything. As there are no thoughts in man which do not tend to an object, so there is no religion without good works. Should any one persist, after this short explanation, in the defence of the Reformed doctrines, I should look on him as a man whose reason is defective. Protestant theologians have vainly endeavoured to get rid of this difficulty. Hence you find among them a host of sects, principally those called Antinomians and Universalists, who have followed out or modified the radical basis of the system.

EUGENE.—You demolish very well, but you do not rebuild. You have left no room, I admit, for either Rome or the Reformation; nevertheless, both of these recognise the insufficiency of human reason, and you appear to tolerate it. But if you endow this poor reason with the power of binding and loosing, it will loose very easily, and never bind. And if it is to make its own faith, we shall run the risk of seeing this faith undergo very lengthened eclipses, if it be not entirely extinguished.

THE OFFICER.—I acknowledge with you the insufficiency of human reason, but I do not deduce from that its absolute in-

capacity of obtaining light. If it were incapable of discovering anything, there would, no doubt, be a certain amount of prudence in adopting either the dogma of the infallible authority of the Pope, or the belief in faith alone; but it is not so. The sacred writings are composed, from one end to the other, in an idiom which we cannot decipher of ourselves, but which we are capable of comprehending so soon as we are taught it. In a word, the Scripture is understood by means of a doctrine. To choose among various doctrines, it is necessary to use the right of examination, and assert the independence of the mind. You see that my system admits at the same time authority in the matter of dogmas, and the insufficiency of individual explanations. But this authority is such that reason is delighted to submit to it, instead of murmuring against it. Do not believe that a doctrine is a yoke imposed on the human mind; in the sciences, as they are termed, if an individual asserts he has the right to proceed without order or method, is he not looked on as a madman? Is it not absolutely necessary that he have recourse to a system in order to comprehend their origin and developments? A system means nothing more than order introduced into the facts of a science; a doctrine, in like manner, is the order by means of which we read and comprehend the Sacred Scripture. You may say that, as every one has his own system in the sciences, every one will have in like manner his own doctrine in religion. And were it even so, truth would not the less exist, good would not the less be accomplished. But observe how the history of the human mind refutes this objection. What philosopher dares, at the present day, to uphold any other system of the mechanism of the universe than that of Newton? And why? Just because universal reason has adopted those principles. It will gradually be thus with other doctrines. Whatever doctrine is recognised as true by the reason of the great majority of the human race, will no longer fear to be dethroned. There will always, doubtless, be madmen who will insist on constructing one according to their own taste; but these vain efforts of individuals will have no influence on the mass of the human race. Are there not maniacs who fancy themselves emperors and kings, and yet the powerful of the world are nowise compromised by their chimeras? The true doctrine, my friends, will soon be known; Protestantism and Ultramontaniam are already dying away. A vague uneasiness has seized upon every mind. Every one perceives that the past is disappearing; that the present is only a state of transition; that the future advances with the universal religion, that true catholicism, whose sacred name has been wrongfully assumed by a fraction of the religious world—in a word, for we must come to that—"That the dragon of the Apocalypse has been

cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, the reign of the great harlot is at an end, and the New Jerusalem has descended upon the earth."

Whilst listening to these last words, I felt as if I was about to fall at full length on the floor. A sort of vertigo seized me, my brain whirled, and, that I might not give Eugene the trouble of bathing my temples with Eau de Cologne, I walked to an adjoining window to breathe the fresh air. The officer, without paying any attention to my proceedings, returned tranquilly to his book, whilst Eugene joined me. It must be confessed, said I to him, that there are strange anomalies in the human mind. Is it not melancholy to hear this man, who spoke so sensibly a few moments ago, raving as he has just done, and that, too, without any apparent cause?

EUGENE.—It is evident that you have not long left your native village, and that you have never studied men. You would be less astonished at this instance of what you consider insanity, if you had lived in society. Every one has his hobby, like this officer. Custom reconciles us to the extravagances of those in whose society we live. Had you a greater amount of philosophy, you would rather take pleasure in beholding the spectacle which is so complacently offered to you by this man. We ought to look on the different species of insanity themselves as we do on those prodigies and freaks that amateurs admire in the natural world. Instead of being displeased with the man who talks incoherently, instead of putting yourself in a passion and reasoning as absurdly as himself, you must let him speak on; and if you can command yourself sufficiently to hear him to an end, you will enjoy a truly curious spectacle. The grossest errors always contain some grains of truth, and you must therefore endeavour to discover those which have served as a pretext for his extravagant system. The Apocalypse is the book which has, most of all, piqued my curiosity. An entire shelf in my library is filled with the works of commentators who have written on it, and I confess that I should have heard our officer out with some interest. It is precisely because the thing is so palpably and revoltingly absurd, that it requires a certain amount of talent to reconcile it with the tolerably plausible ideas to which he at first gave utterance.

MYSELF.—In fact, the medium which he has found between the Protestants and Roman Catholics is rational enough. He rejects alike the blind and absolute faith of the former, and the exclusive and tyrannical pretensions to Papal infallibility of the latter. If there must be despotism, I should prefer that of a Doctrine on which my reason, whether strong or feeble, is to decide, than the Authority of an individual which forbids the exercise of my intellect. But to unite the Apocalypse

with this system is, truly, what I cannot understand. I have always regarded this obscure book as a collection of astrological predictions, a fact which Dupuis has made abundantly evident.

EUGENE.—The explanations of Dupuis appear to me far from being conclusive. If the book of Revelation be the work of the Apostle John, which does not seem to be denied, this man was too honest to play the part of an astrologer for his readers. You may be certain that it is the history of society which he proposed to write; and among all the interpretations which have hitherto appeared, none seems to me more plausible than that of Rossuet. I even acknowledge that I have not been able to read any other commentator without disgust, not even the great Newton and the fiery Jurieu.

MYSELF.—All these historical systems, my dear friend, resemble the extravagant opinions of the students and admirers of the Celtic language. The field of history is so vast, that you find matter in it for every possible application. The idea of Dupuis, on the contrary, is the simplest which exists. The earliest human beings, surrounded by the wonders of the universe, saw nothing else, and their symbols of worship were the exact representation of external phenomena. This opinion I shall never abandon, and I am ready to defend it against the world.

EUGENE.—And, for my part, I shall hold to mine. Who is to decide between us? I do not think that we can find any one more capable of reconciling us than this officer, whose ideas clash so much with yours, and who appears to hold opinions respecting the Apocalypse which are to be found neither in the historic system nor in your symbolical interpretation of the emblems borrowed from material nature.

MYSELF.—I came here to look for a final demonstration of the truth, and I find only the Apocalypse. It must be confessed that chance could not have turned me farther from my path. What has the Apocalypse to do with moral evidence? For a moment I fancied the bandage on the point of falling from my eyes, and now a darkness, more profound than that which I believed dissipated, gathers about me. What a humiliating condition for a philosopher! The English doctor who sought for truth among the Brahmins of India, found at least the good Paria who advised him to seek it with a simple heart; whilst I, in the midst of all the intellect and learning of a great metropolis, and in the middle of the nineteenth century, engaged with all possible sincerity in the search of truth, only find, at the close of all my tedious studies, the Apocalypse! I almost fancy myself one of those heroes of romance, who are led by elves into what seems to them wild and beautiful scenery, but who, at last, find themselves

plunged in marsh and mire. My dear Eugene, I really believe my disappointment will make me ill.

EUGENE.—Ah! my friend, the whole of this adventure proves that you have been building upon sand. The Apocalypse is about to overturn your frail edifice, as the Gospel has destroyed, from top to bottom, all those of ancient philosophy.

MYSELF.—In point of fact, *Apocalypse* in Greek signifies revelation, and it may be an indirect lesson of Providence, which teaches us that, without revelation, there can be no truth for man. But I have not yet got so far, and I fancy I shall not come to this point easily. I should first have to burn a whole ream of paper filled with arguments of my own and those of the authors whom I have read, and this is not a sacrifice which I am disposed to make without a struggle. I approve, nevertheless, of your idea, and to-morrow, if you permit me, I shall request you to introduce me a second time to your new interpreter of the Apocalypse. Having thus said, I took leave of Eugene, very ill satisfied with myself, by no means grateful for the communication of an opinion so opposed to my own, and disposed beforehand to listen to the officer with the sole intention of combating his arguments.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO SYSTEMS REFUTED.

NIGHT calmed the fever of my blood, and on the morrow of the day on which I had experienced so bitter a disappointment, I proceeded to Eugene's house, more disposed than before to listen to the truth. I felt that I had been wrong in supposing that my edifice was not liable to attack. I thanked my friend for the information he had given me, and entreated him to delay no longer the explanations which I had come to look for. The officer, who had been previously apprised by Eugene, came forward to meet us as soon as he perceived me. You were surprised, said he, to hear me state yesterday that the dragon of the Apocalypse represents the religion called Protestant, and the harlot that called Romish.*

MYSELF.—One might well be surprised at even a less strange assertion ; and I confess, although this is the second time I

* If, when directing our attention to the struggle between the two communions, we follow the intention of the author, we shall abstract our minds from the part which both have acted in the sixteenth century, as well as the influence which they still exercise in our own days, and shall occupy ourselves solely with their doctrines, and not with the men who profess them. We sympathise with the latter, because neither the one system nor the other excludes its followers from pursuing what is good ; but to understand the proposition thoroughly, we must look at it in all its logical consequences, without introducing the question of Salvation, and then give or withhold our assent. By not following this precept, certain biblical expressions may appear hard to those who apply to individuals what is only directed against the false principles which these unwittingly hold. It never entered into the mind of the author of the *Key to the Mystery* to stigmatise true Christians of either communion, he always laid down this principle in his lifetime ; and, in fact, an opposite line of conduct would have been inconsistent with his own doctrine.

It is by no means, therefore, pious Christians, whether of Geneva or Rome, who are represented here by the Dragon and Babylon ; but, as will be seen in the course of the work, those Christians or Hebrews, Mussulmans or followers of Brahma, who, on the one hand, systematically separating faith from charity and good works, require us rather to believe than to love and act ; and, on the other hand, those who, forgetting their human weakness and fallibility, arrogate to themselves the power of acting as viceregents of God, who alone trieth the heart and the reins. There are Babylonians among those who style themselves Protestants, as there are adorers of the Dragon among those who claim to be orthodox Roman Catholics, while there are to be found in every sect disciples of the New Jerusalem.—(Note of the Curator of the Manuscripts of the late M. Ed. Richer.)

have heard it stated, I can scarcely be persuaded that you are speaking seriously.

THE OFFICER.—Most seriously, I assure you, so far as the abuses which we find in these two religious systems, as well as in many others, are concerned. But may I ask what do you think the Apocalypse is, then? Can a prophet have anything else in view than the destinies of religion? Do you believe that God attaches so much importance to our political revolutions as to reveal beforehand the events of the world by the mouth of a prophet?

MYSELF.—To interpret the Apocalypse historically, is, I acknowledge, the most ridiculous of all pretensions; but to look on these fantastic figures as the representation of the material universe is not, perhaps, so irrational. For example, how can we deny that they typify the combat of light and heat against cold and darkness? Do you not see that the constellations of winter and autumn, the enemies of spring and summer, figure there? The autumnal serpent introduces evil into the world, and the vernal lamb restores harmony to it. How can we avoid recognising in this Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world, the celestial ram, the first sign of the zodiac, who comes to take away, literally, the severity of winter? It is the victory of the sun which the astrologer John has represented under forms so singular. A proof of this is, that the Restorer or Redeemer is surrounded by the twelve tribes, as the sun is by the twelve signs. He is in the centre of the candlestick with seven branches, as the sun is in the centre of the seven planets.

EUGENE.—I must stop you here. According to the ancients, the sun was not the centre of the planetary system. More accuracy, if you please.

MYSELF.—Again, these numbers, twelve and seven, which are evidently borrowed from astronomy, are to be found everywhere in the book of St John; the first is repeated there fourteen times, and the second twenty-four. The apostle speaks of twenty-four elders around the Lamb, as the poets represent the twenty-four hours of the day as circling around the sun. The four mysterious animals are the four constellations placed at the junction of the equinoxes and solstices. The Virgin, who brings forth a son, is the virgin of the zodiac, represented on ancient globes with a son in her arms. A red dragon pursues her, to devour the fruit of her womb, and this dragon—in which you see a figure of Protestantism, the creation of yesterday, although St John says that it is the great serpent which introduced evil into the world—this dragon, I say, is still placed in our own days beneath the pole of the ecliptic, which it embraces with its folds, as if to indicate that, if the star which traverses this circle be taken for the prin-

ciple of good, the constellation which is diametrically opposite to it may justly be taken for the sole source of evil. Lastly, St John says, that this dragon has seven heads, and the constellation of this name extends over seven signs.

THE OFFICER.—You may add, that the child which is carried by the celestial virgin is called by the Arabs, and especially by Albumazar, *Christ*, or *Jesus*. You may add, that the Lamb, the restorer of the material world, receives the sun at the period when the Church celebrates the feast of the mystical lamb, I mean at Easter. The sign of the Redeemer is then apparent in the heavens; in fact, at the equinox the ecliptic cuts the equator so as to represent a cross.

EUGENE.—This latter fact may be taken, if you will, as a sort of fantastic analogy, but common sense will never receive it as a proof. The ecliptic and the equator do not cut each other at right angles, which they must have done to form a cross. There may be probability in the general system of Dupuis, but I think, if we examine the details, we shall not find the same accuracy.

THE OFFICER.—That is just what I was going to say when you interrupted me. The numbers seven and twelve derive their origin from a different source, I hope, than the seven planets and the twelve signs. The revolution of the moon has given us the twelve months; while its four phases have divided the month into four portions of seven days each. If the astrologers have given to each of these days the name of a planet, I see in that only an after-thought. The astrological character of the lamb is, therefore, the only thing which offers any point of contact with religion, and is a feeble ground, it must be admitted, for affirming that the Apocalypse is entirely an astronomical scheme. You will observe, too, that Dupuis is greatly embarrassed with the purely moral counsels addressed by St John to the seven Asiatic churches. He is also silent with regard to the plagues and the events which occur from the fifth to the twelfth chapter. Here he resumes his task as commentator, but only to explain the beasts and their fantastic appurtenances by the rising and setting of the constellations, a mode of interpretation which often appears to me much more ridiculous than the vision itself, if we assume it to be such. The astrologer, with his incoherent and insignificant images, seems to have lost his reason; and if we must have a madman, I like the visionary quite as well as him. We meet with much less difficulty in the system which looks on the visions of St John as the dreams of a man in extasis, than in that which views them as an arbitrary astrological theme without any signification. We find Dupuis, however, talking in this strain only as far as the twentieth chapter; this, and the two follow-

ing, which end the Apocalypse, he admits, are a moral picture, the key to which we must look for in the spiritual philosophy of the ancients. You see that there is a want of system in his plan. There are probabilities in it, if you will; but there are gaps, there are arbitrary interpretations; there are concessions made to moral nature; and hence physical nature is not the only key to the system. The monstrous beasts have so little of a determinate astrological sense in his eyes, that he himself says that it is difficult to explain them in all circumstances, and that no doubt they are merely introduced to *astonish and terrify the universe*. Here you have a confession of the embarrassment of the commentator. In another place, where he attempts to interpret the chapters included between the fifth and the twelfth, he says that all that is contained in these chapters seems to him nothing but the offspring of the imagination, and that it is *useless to seek to explain it according to any fixed plan*. Take a note of this confession—it is the conscience acknowledging that it has lost the clue. Everything in these chapters, he adds, is the *expression of religious delirium*. So we have religion and astrology mingled together! That is another very remarkable confession; and, lastly, I observe a third, which puts me quite at my ease with regard to Dupuis:—*There is always, he says, much that is arbitrary in these explanations of details; fortunately, he adds, they do not affect the whole*. I request you to observe, that this *whole* becomes reduced to the part performed by the lamb, the virgin, and the dragon. One must be very simple, to attempt to explain all the Apocalypse by these three emblems.

EUGENE.—Your refutation is complete, and my poor friend has nothing to object. Let us pass on, if you please, to my system.

THE OFFICER.—Allow me first to prove the truth of my criticism. I remark that the chapters at the commencement of the Apocalypse have no relation whatever to the celestial sphere; according to Dupuis himself, they are matters of simple morality. Anxious, however, to find some connexion between the seven churches and the seven planets, he remarks that Ephesus, where Diana was adored, may very fairly represent the moon. Thyatira appears to him to correspond to Venus, because, he says, this planet, in the order of the *astrological houses*, is named the fourth; and in the book of St John, Thyatira is the fourth city in the order of enumeration. This reason is so feeble, that the author is ashamed of it; so he adds immediately afterwards, that the *morning-star* promised to this church is evidently the planet Venus. To this I reply—and it seems to me sound logic—that as all here is moral and emblematic, we must understand, by the promise of a star to

Thyatira, not the star itself, but that which the star represents. Finally, the last church mentioned by St John has as its tutelary genius him who is neither cold nor hot, and the apostle reproaches him with his *lukewarmness*. Precisely, exclaims Dupuis, that is the aged and frigid Saturn, the planet farthest removed from the rays of the sun. Out of seven planets there are only three which have any relation to the seven cities of St John, and even those coincidences can scarcely be adduced without provoking a smile.

EUGENE.—What does the partisan of Dupuis reply to that ?

MYSELF.—Nothing, except that there is a sort of general coincidence between them, as our friend has well remarked ; there I take my stand.

EUGENE.—In the meantime, allow us to proceed.

The OFFICER.—In the fourth chapter we remark the appearance of the four mysterious animals of the Apocalypse, which Dupuis considers as the four constellations, placed, like hinges of the sky, at the four cardinal points of the sphere, namely, at the two equinoxes and the two solstices. These four animals are, in St John, the lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle ; while in the celestial chart, I find, at the four points indicated, the lion, the bull, the water-bearer, and the scorpion. The latter is preceded by the constellation of the lyre ; the lyre is carried by a vulture, which some have called an eagle. Dupuis places this bird opposite the three other signs, so as to have the scorpion at the side. He accounts for this by saying that the scorpion, an emblem assigned to Dan, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, was rejected by this patriarch, on account of the fatal influence attributed to it, and that Dan took for his emblem the vulture carrying the lyre. I request your attention to this point. It supposes that the twelve patriarchs took for their emblems the twelve signs of the zodiac, and this is not true. In the first place, the twelve sons of Jacob are scarcely ever mentioned in the Bible in the same order, which would have been the case if they had represented the twelve constellations of the zodiac. But granting this for a moment, the four sons of Jacob, which correspond to the four animals, should be Reuben, Dan, Judah, and Ephraim, since it is they who are named in the order of primogeniture. Reuben would be the man, or the water-bearer, and Jacob compares him, in fact, to water which is “unstable ;” but why place at the head of the twelve signs the one which indicates the winter solstice ? When did the year so commence ? Dan, who rejected the scorpion as his emblem, is compared by his father to an adder in the path. Judah is the lion—we have no difficulty there ; Ephraim is the bull. But in the enumeration of the twelve tribes made by St John in the seventh chapter, it is rather odd that we find neither Dan nor Ephraim men-

tioned. It is likewise strange that Joseph is altogether omitted in the zodiac. It is quite as difficult to account for this confusion as for the visions of the apostle. After this short digression, I return to the four mysterious animals, which in Dupuis' system perform so important a part. But of the four mentioned by John, I find, in reality, only two in the celestial chart, the *lion*, and the *man* who holds the water-bearer's urn. Observe, again, that in the ancient sphere of the Egyptian constellations, instead of a man, in the sign of the water-bearer, there is only an urn, called Canope; and, in fact, it is very doubtful whether the sign of the water-bearer contained the figure of a man before the invention of the Greek fable of the beautiful Ganymede, the cup-bearer of the gods. St John speaks of a calf and an eagle, which the sphere does not contain. In the second place, if we agree to accept the explanation of Dupuis, and substitute the calf for the bull, we change all the symbolic signification of the book. In fact, the only ground for looking on the Apocalypse as an astronomical scheme, is that the lamb, or the ram, the equinoctial sign, represents the victory of the sun over darkness in the spring. If you substitute the bull for the lamb, as the equinoctial sign, you change the whole order and the signification of the signs. The lamb no longer plays the part that St John attributes to it, and the astrologer is in manifest contradiction with himself. If St John here alludes to a time when the equinox was represented by the bull, as is the case in the Mithriac faith, he can no longer speak in the present tense of a period when the ram determined this period of the year. If the sphere be supported upon the four cardinal points, by means of these four constellations, the ram is no longer one of these points, and, as being beyond the intersection of the equinox, it has no longer the privilege of representing the victory of the God of day.

EUGENE.—Abandon, I entreat you, this astronomical theory of yours.

MYSELF.—Not yet, if you please. Our friend must explain to me the striking coincidence which exists between the course of the sun, his birth at the winter solstice, his resurrection at the spring equinox, his action at that epoch under the emblem of the lamb, and the circumstances of the life of Jesus Christ, who was born at Christmas, arose from the tomb at Easter, and is adored under the symbol of the lamb. I should also wish to know what is this virgin who brings forth a son whom the dragon seeks to devour. The virgin of the constellation alone, it appears to me, can be a mother and a virgin at the same time. Observe, that at Christmas, the moment when the sun may be said to be born, that is, to commence a new career, the virgin rises on the horizon, as if

she produced the God of day. Explain to me these two emblems, the lamb and the virgin, and pass over the rest.

THE OFFICER.—I must request you to remark that you leap at once to the twelfth chapter, because, in fact, Dupuis could discover nothing in the previous ones. I must farther remark that this virgin, whose place in the sphere will be explained to you by my doctrine, is not a mere astronomical emblem. Ancient fable also adopted it. St John says that the woman of the Apocalypse had the sun upon her head and the moon under her feet, that, being in travail of a male child, she was pursued by the dragon, and that, to escape the pursuit of the latter, she fled into the desert. Mythology tells us also that Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana, when about to bring her son into the world, was pursued by the serpent Python, and that she sought an asylum in a desert island. You see clearly, that if the story of the apostle be borrowed from ancient tradition, mythology, as well as astronomy, can lay claim to certain emblems of it. I shall explain all this to you in such a way, I trust, as not to leave you the slightest doubt.

EUGENE.—Who could have guessed, gentlemen, that a conversation on the Apocalypse would lead us to explore the most remarkable monuments of antiquity? Those who imagine that nothing is to be met with in this book but fantastic images deceive themselves grossly. Proceed, if you please, sir; I now take too much pleasure in listening to you, to feel any inclination to interrupt you.

THE OFFICER.—I resume the consideration of the twelfth chapter, in which the virgin is introduced. St John says, that at this moment *the ark of the covenant of God was seen in heaven*. Dupuis does not fail to tell us that beside the virgin arose also the vessel called the ark. I grant that the ark of Noah may be represented by a vessel, but to take this vessel for the ark of the covenant is imposing on the credulity of the reader. Observe, that in order to find the red dragon which pursues the woman, and which vomits forth after her a river of water, Dupuis is obliged to leave the polar dragon, as being too far removed from the scene of action, and to take the *serpent of Ophiuchus*. The river of water, he says, is that of the Eridan, which sets at the rising of the serpent. One must be more credulous than I am, I confess, to be satisfied with such feeble semblances of truth. Here mystic numbers appear, the sum of twelve hundred and sixty days. St John speaks of a time, of times, and the half of a time, on the origin of which astrology throws no light. Finally, the dragon carries away with his tail the third part of the stars; and Dupuis does not attempt, as you may well imagine, to find the least connexion between this terrible vision and the phenomena of the heavens, which are so perfectly regulated.

MYSELF.—We now come to the two monstrous beasts, and here, at least, there is some appearance of truth in the system of Dupuis.

THE OFFICER.—The only appearance of truth lies in this, that we find in the sphere a lion and a bear, and that the beast seen by St John had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. Is that clear enough to enable us to identify the beast of the prophet? St John says that he saw on the sea-shore a beast with seven heads and ten horns, and upon these horns ten diadems, with names of blasphemy. He adds that it resembled a leopard. As for the latter, it is not certainly in the sphere; but the beast is there under another appearance. Dupuis looks towards the sea, that is, towards the east, and he sees the constellation of the whale, which he identifies with the mysterious beast without troubling himself about the ten heads, the ten horns, the ten diadems, nor with the names of blasphemy either. He himself so clearly recognises the feebleness of his interpretation, that he tells us to substitute, if we wish, the *hydra of Lerna*, which had really seven heads, for the whale, to which he could not give more than one. The second beast he looks on as the head of Medusa, which presents, at the same time, the horns of the *lamb* and the body of the *autumnal serpent*. After this comes the number of the beast, which is that of a man. The number 666 perplexes him so much, that although he makes an astrological talisman of it, he gives neither its origin nor explanation.

EUGENE.—And the fire which the second beast caused to descend from heaven?

THE OFFICER.—The ancients attributed this power to Medusa. It is certain that this vernal sign, in the general system, which we always recognise as most exact, might represent the fire of the sun, which then descends with more strength upon the earth. As for the deadly wound of the beast, and the healing of the wound, this, it seems, is the disappearance of the whale in the west, and its re-appearance in the east; wounded to death in the evening, it is cured the following morning.

EUGENE.—It must be confessed, that to advance such statements, is to mock the credulity of the best intentioned reader.

THE OFFICER.—In the following chapter, St John sees two angels armed with scythes; Dupuis takes Arcturus in the west for one of them, and, in reality, Arcturus is represented holding a reaping-hook in his hand; in the east, Perseus, armed with a sword, is the other angel; it is very lucky that there is a sword there to turn into a reaping-hook. Farther, the seven angels, with the seven plagues, are, according to him, the seven stars of the Pleiades. We come now to the descent of the New Jerusalem. Here, as Dupuis himself confesses, we have

nothing to do with constellations ; he supposes it to be the emblem of the sublunary world ; Babylon is that of this terrestrial one. Thus we fall into mysticism, after commencing with physical nature. We end by adopting a moral instead of an astronomical interpretation ; it was not worth taking so much trouble to produce such feeble results. However, Dupuis displays some regret here ; resolving to detect a constellation in Babylon, he returns to his constellation of the whale, which, as it lives in the sea, is in his mind symbolical of a city placed upon the coast. Here the spirit of system leads him to the most manifest contradiction. At first, he looked on the genius of evil as inhabiting the northern hemisphere, far from the only centre of light and heat ; but now we are asked to place it in the south, that is to say, in the same region where the sun reigns. Let the most cunning reasoner get rid of this difficulty ; for my part, my intellect cannot grapple with it. If any one, more ingenious than I, pretend that the south pole, as well as our own, is the seat of cold and darkness, I shall reply that modern science alone has revealed that fact to him ; but that in the time of St John this question was not even agitated. In the twentieth chapter, we see the Son of Man seated upon a white horse. Perseus, whom Dupuis has converted into an angel, armed with a scythe, although he has none, is again made use of to represent the horseman, although the sphere assigns him no horse ; it is true that Hesiod, who, as poet, was obliged to bestow an epithet, calls this personage of the fable a rider.

EUGENE.—And the flesh of kings and horsemen, of which the angel invites the spectators to partake ?

THE OFFICER.—That does not concern Dupuis. According to him, it is an allusion to a local custom of the ancient Persians, who left the dead unburied and exposed to the fowls of heaven. With him we sometimes drop astronomy, as you see. In the twentieth chapter, we see that the dragon is *chained and then loosed*. The lamb rising in the east is supposed, in his theory, to enchain the serpent, which sets in the west ; but this sign still continues to be seen till the summer solstice. It is only then that it is completely subdued. The honour of the victory should, therefore, belong to the solstitial constellation. There is something wrong here. We now come to the *second death*, of which St John speaks, and here Dupuis has again recourse to oriental mysticism. He quotes, on this occasion, the good Plutarch, who was a frank and open spiritualist. In the twenty-first chapter, we find only the names of Plato and Pythagoras brought to support the ideas of Dupuis, and here we breathe a refreshing atmosphere ; it is no longer hideous materialism, but the pleasing dream of *Scipio*, that we have before us. There is

some pleasure in making such excursions. The city of St John is no longer an unmeaning reverie. Dupuis observes that its twelve gates correspond to the dodcagon, under which figure the Pythagoreans represented the world. He remarks that the city of the blessed, described by Plato in the Phædon, had likewise twelve sides, each side of a different brilliant colour, which answers to the twelve precious stones with which St John embellished his city.

EUGENE.—How interesting these coincidences are! How highly the value of the Apocalypse is enhanced by these analogies! Dupuis, in viewing it as a monument of oriental science, renders it as venerable, whatever be his interpretations, as it is ridiculous when interpreted literally.

THE OFFICER.—In concluding his laborious commentary, Dupuis quotes Proclus, who was not a materialist, as every one knows, and in whose opinion material figures are the significations of heavenly things. It is there, gentlemen, you must look for the explanation you require. If you follow Dupuis to the letter, you are a materialist with him in the beginning, and religious at the end; but we must, I think, be wholly the one or wholly the other. I cannot conceive a more palpable absurdity than the doctrine that there is no other blessing for man than the vernal light and heat which descend upon the earth at the spring equinox, at the moment when the sun enters the sign of the ram; and that there is no real and absolute evil, but that which results from the passing of the sun into the autumnal sign, to which is joined the constellation of the serpent; so that in the rising and setting of the ram, and the rising and setting of the autumnal serpent, lies all that man has to expect or fear. Is it not clear as day that these are only striking emblems of the constant struggle between moral good and evil? How often do the learned torture themselves for mere trifles! Truth is within their grasp, and, instead of looking at it, they heap volume on volume, with immense labour and cost, merely to arrive at error at the last. My doctrine, which will perhaps reveal the Apocalypse to you divested of clouds or uncertainty, deserves, I hope, that you should give it some consideration, and if you have no objection, we shall enter at once on the subject.

EUGENE.—A moment, if you please. I admit that you have drubbed my friend tolerably well; but I think that I have discovered the true interpretation of the Apocalypse in the explanation given by Bossuet, who on this subject has overlooked no work worthy of attention. If you do not commence by proving to me the falsity of my opinion, I shall be too confident and too strong in my own convictions, to give you an attentive hearing.

MYSELF.—It is only just that my friend should not be

treated with more lenity than myself. After the historical and physical systems have been proved erroneous, I see no possibility of adopting any other hypothesis of the meaning of the Apocalypse, than that which has relation to heaven. In fact, history claims the Apocalypse as figuring the events of this world, and natural science as presenting emblems of natural order; our last resource, then, is to view it as a picture of the intellectual universe.

THE OFFICER.—That is precisely what I shall attempt to shew in the explanation which I promised you. In the meantime, since you request it, let us rapidly review the commentary of Bossuet. The examination will spare us, as you observe, the reading of Newton, Jurieu, Fabricius, and even of the fathers who have written on the Revelation of St John.* All these works, in fact, are based on the historical system. This system is, in my opinion, the most erroneous, if not the most ridiculous of all. Can you believe that the Almighty should think it necessary to write beforehand, for us, the history of the reign of Diocletian, or that of such or such a pontiff? He instructs us as to our relations towards him, by the more vast and trustful history of the human heart. The puppets of this world, to which we attach so much importance, may be placed in circumstances calculated to induce some feeble minds to regard them as the beasts of the Apocalypse. By torturing the words of Scripture a little, we can find as many Antichrists, Gogs, and Magogs, as we choose, on the stage of this world, and will be certain to explain the scenes of the Apocalypse just according to the place which we occupy in the great political drama. But allow me to say that it is only feeble intellects who can look at things in this point of view. It is because their minds are confined within narrow limits, and in circumscribed places. I do not doubt that there are worthy women capable of realising the Apocalypse, without difficulty, in the recent history of the French Revolution; but what do you conclude from that? Only that these good women are foolish, and that one ruling idea absorbs all their faculties. Bossuet, notwithstanding all the grandeur of his genius, has written, be assured, under the impression of a similar idea. The Protestants have established, in a Synod, that the Great Harlot is the Church of Rome, from which Church they have withdrawn. Instead of replying to this criticism with sound reasons, Bossuet says, "My friends, it is certainly Rome which St John has so designated; but then it is Pagan, and not Christian Rome." On this basis he builds up his romance, and his flock applauds.

MYSELF.—My dear Eugene, you are answered. I confess

* In this catalogue may of course be included the more recent commentators, such as Elliott, and his exponent Dr Cumming, &c.—ED.

that for my part I never had any other opinion of Bossuet's work. The explanation which we have just heard is too true to be refuted.

EUGENE.—We shall see. Let us come to the details.

THE OFFICER.—As for the details, you have only to read the book from one end to the other, and simply repeat to yourself, This is all a political history. But who ever wrote history in such a style? Did Bossuet really imagine that St John saw Diocletian under the form of a huge beast? Wherefore make use of these monstrous figures, when the matter in question is composed of things which have tried, known, and determinate forms? To adopt this as undoubted history, which has its dates and its localities, requires so vigorous a faith, that it is only removed by a single step from insanity. Dupuis, at least, tells us that it is symbolical; and, in truth, if material nature has been deified, it is only by an allegorical worship that it would be possible to deceive the people. But why deceive them here? I torture my brains in vain to discover a valid reason.

MYSELF.—How, then, can you defend your own explanations, since you attack so openly and unsparingly, and also with so much reason, commentaries which are founded, like your own, on the figurative meaning?

THE OFFICER.—That we shall see just now. I shall endeavour at present to read the commentary of Bossuet, and keep my gravity. I say nothing of the emblems in detail which Bossuet has derived in part from the fathers. Thus he sees clearly that the numbers have mystical significations; he understands that the feet of Jesus Christ, when he appeared to the seer of Patmos, signify his advent. As is plainly deducible from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, seventh verse, he discovers in the two-edged sword the Divine Word, which St Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, calls sharper than a sword. The admonitions addressed to the churches contain simple lessons of morality, which every one can understand, without making any great efforts. There are no metaphors there—no historical events. With the fourth chapter begins the interpretation. We saw, a moment ago, that in the city of Plato, as in that of St John, there was mention made of precious stones. Beneath this a symbolical signification lies; of that there is no doubt. Do you know how Bossuet escapes from this difficulty? "In these soft hues," he says, "we see God, clad in benign majesty, and with a radiance pleasing to the eyes." There would be almost ingenuity in this remark, were not ingenuity precisely the quality with which the grave author of the *History of the Variations* can least of all be reproached. The four-and-twenty elders, he says, are the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, in order that both

Testaments may be represented. There is nothing to say to the exactness of the numbers ; an assertion so formal must be believed. The four animals in which Dupuis saw the four hinges of the firmament are to Bossuet the four evangelists. We find that he advances profound reasons for his choice. A man, says he, is the emblem of St Matthew, because that evangelist commences his narrative by giving the genealogy of Jesus Christ as man ; and the lion of St Mark, from the voice crying in the wilderness, and the voice could be only that of a lion. The calf is the attribute of St Luke, because that author commences his narrative with the history of the high-priest Zacharias, and the high-priest naturally recalls the victim. Lastly, the eagle is the ordinary symbol of penetration, and this quality is displayed in a high degree by St John in the first chapter of his gospel.

MYSELF.—It is not possible that on such flimsy grounds the evangelists are represented in all our Christian temples by these four figures.

EUGENE.—The gentleman has only said what is perfectly true. I do not know how I can have read all that without being staggered by the difficulties it presents ; I do not understand how it happens that St John, who was the spectator of the scene, should see himself as an actor in it. That he saw the other evangelists is all very well, but his own place at least should appear vacant.

THE OFFICER.—I do not undertake to explain Bossuet's version ; I simply state it.

MYSELF.—Besides, it must be confessed that in this case St John treats himself with distinction. He sees his neighbour St Luke as a calf, while he modestly chooses for himself the form of an eagle. That is not very humble.

THE OFFICER.—These inconsistencies, my friend, are only in the commentary : remember that the inspired volume is too true, too profound, for our pleasantry to affect it.

MYSELF.—Granted ; but if Bossuet always writes in the same manner, I should have some difficulty in restraining my merriment.

THE OFFICER.—The fifth chapter presents no other event than the appearance of the mystic lamb. In the sixth, the four emblematical horses, instead of signifying things which have their origin in the human heart, he makes merely the emblems of physical objects. In Bossuet's opinion, the red horse is war, the black one is famine, and the pale horse is pestilence. But God knows how to punish the wicked by other than external plagues ; be assured that there exists in the heart of man wherewithal to recompense and to punish him, without the necessity of inflicting on him physical calamities. That would be an ignoble system of chastisement.

MYSELF.—It is the guilty who ought to be punished ; that is self-evident. How unworthy of his goodness would be the conduct of the Divinity, if the world were governed as Bossuet would have it ! War, famine, and pestilence too often pursue the virtuous now, whilst vice reposes tranquilly in ease and abundance. I for one do not adopt that version, my dear Eugene.

EUGENE.—Nor I either ; it is too narrow.

THE OFFICER.—In the seventh chapter, Bossuet sees the accomplishment of the last judgment on the Jews. It was necessary to begin with those who had put Jesus Christ to death, before coming to the persecutors of the Church. This system is false, even according to the tradition of the fathers. The Jewish Church was a purely representative church. It was commissioned to foreshadow to the world, by its example, that which occurred in the establishment of Christianity. It was the figure of what Jesus Christ afterwards effected. Wherever the Jews, the tribes, and the prophets are named, we must look on them as moral emblems, and not as the Jewish nation itself. This nation appears, therefore, in the Apocalypse in the same figurative sense which it bears in the Prophets ; so much is clear. Thus, the hundred and forty-four thousand, chosen among the tribes, signify an indefinite multitude, taken from among those persons who are intended to be figured forth by the tribes, and not among the Hebrews alone. The number one hundred and forty-four is twelve multiplied by itself, and this square number represents exactly the infinite number of the members of the real Church on earth. That is the idea which the words of St John carry with them. But, when applying them solely to the Jews, Bossuet cannot avoid remarking, that, considering this great multitude of redeemed among so wicked a people, we are led to wonder at the Divine mercy. “ What a consolation it would be,” he adds, in the simplicity of his heart, “ to see so great a number of saints ! ”

MYSELF.—Simplicity is not usually a characteristic of Bossuet. The remark which he makes here is, however, very puerile.

THE OFFICER.—His terminating observation is not less so. “ The more unintelligible the rest of the chapter is,” he says, “ the more it deserves our deepest meditation.” I always believed, till now, that we can meditate only on that which is comprehensible. What faith, my friends—I appeal to your sense of equity—what faith can be founded on the unintelligible ?—if it be the province of the intellect to excite affection, must it not commence by seeing its road clearly ?

EUGENE.—Certainly ; this idea must form the basis of even the most circumscribed system.

THE OFFICER.—The elect being separated from the Jewish people, the Divine judgment is accomplished on the rest of the nation. The trumpets are taken literally, so I leave you to judge of the noise which this music must make. The coals are real coals; you see that the interpreter is not disposed to make any great concessions. Dupuis could not explain why the dragon drew after him the third part of the stars. Bossuet feels no embarrassment in explaining why the third part of the earth only was struck, which he does by telling us that it was because the menace regarded the Jews alone, and did not concern the entire world. The star that fell from heaven, the name of which was Wormwood, is, according to him, a false Messiah of those days, whose name really signified Star, and whose doctrine was bitter as wormwood.

MYSELF.—I am fairly confounded; shut the book, I entreat you, and let us pass to your explanation.

THE OFFICER.—Why, we have only commenced. What follows may perhaps give you more confidence in the explanatory system of Bossuet and in his sincerity. In the ninth chapter the locusts appear; that is a natural type of the Jewish heretics. In fact, he says, heretics arise in a corrupted church, a character expressed by locusts, whose generation is so little known, that they are believed to proceed from putrefaction.

MYSELF.—What natural history! We must add this spontaneous generation to that of the infusoria. What a sharp observer was this Bossuet!

THE OFFICER.—The corruption of the air or the soil is the origin of locusts (we are still quoting Bossuet, you must bear in mind), just as corruption of the morals and the intellect gives birth to heresies. There are striking analogies too between them; these insects can neither walk on the ground like the animals, by regular movements, nor fly in the air like birds; heretics also jump from one question to another. They ruin the harvest of the church, as the locusts destroy that of the ploughman. They have no king, says Solomon, and yet they go in battalions: the heretics, without a chief, do the same thing. Lastly, locusts have a short life, and heresies do not survive long.

EUGENE.—I never remarked all that, and I confess I never could have believed that a genius like Bossuet could amuse himself with such childish observations. I shall not speak of the notion of the heretics leaping or jumping, that is almost burlesque; but I cannot help remarking that they have always chiefs, by whose names they are called, although they have no Pope. Thus we have the Manicheans, the Sabellians, the Valentinians, the Carpocratians; because a Manes, a Sabellius, a Valentinus, and Carpocrates have existed. As to the duration of these opinions, it cannot be said that they are short-lived. The

Manichæans of the earliest centuries reappeared in the middle ages, and many persons are still suspected of being such. We have also, in the present day, a large body of recognised Arians.

MYSELF.—And, besides, it is an assertion contradicted by history. In the Old Testament, where there is no mention of heretics, locusts are spoken of. Joel gives the Assyrians this name.

THE OFFICER.—I come to the historical chapters. I shall merely say a word, in passing, respecting the little book that St John ate. This book, at first sweet, and then bitter, typifies, according to Bossuet, the pleasure felt by the prophet at seeing the divine vengeance exercised upon the enemies of religion, and then his regret at the sight of so many men sacrificed and lost without resource. This pleasure, you will confess, is, in the first place, very selfish; but the regret that follows it is an insult to the Divinity.

MYSELF.—It cannot be otherwise. You find human nature the same everywhere. Vengeance was the pleasure of the gods of the heathen mythology; it is a feeling deeply rooted in the human heart. And then, is not this regret at seeing man writhing for an eternity upon living coals perfectly natural? What do we gain by such interpretations? They are more improbable and fantastic than the literal meaning itself.

THE OFFICER.—This demonstrates the necessity of our taking visions as visions; the explanations that I shall give you will prove the truth of this, I hope. I shall be careful to see nothing in what St John perceived but the spectacle itself presented to a man in a state of extasis. In the meantime, we shall continue to follow Bossuet, who has been sometimes termed the last father of the Church. The Council of Trent puts us quite at our ease on that point, since it passes over the eleventh and twelfth chapters, and considers them as treating only of the affairs of this world.

EUGENE.—In these two chapters, however, I have always thought there were two things which Bossuet explained very sensibly. You are aware that two witnesses are spoken of, who are supposed to be Enoch and Elias. Bossuet, more wisely, takes them for the people and the clergy, bearing testimony to the Christian faith by the martyrdom which they underwent.

THE OFFICER.—That is all very well; but what about the candlesticks and the olive-trees, which are represented as the attributes of these witnesses?

MYSELF.—The candlestick belongs to the clergy, who diffuse the light; the olive-tree to the peaceable people, who listen.

THE OFFICER.—I should prefer considering the two witnesses as the two fundamental truths of the Church, faith and love. But what is the second explanation which satisfied you?

EUGENE.—In the thirteenth chapter, the virgin in travail, he says, is not a constellation, but the Church. That is a much better interpretation.

THE OFFICER.—Of course ; it is also the generally received version. St John says that the woman cried in travail, and brought forth in suffering. Bossuet sees in this the cries and sufferings of the martyrs. Poor human reason ! Was it not a simple matter to view this travail as the temptation of the spirit—pure love combating impure love—man giving birth with pain to a sentiment which constrains his inclinations ?

MYSELF.—But hold ; if you do not take care, you are about to give us your whole theory. Let us come back to the dragon who wished to devour the child.

THE OFFICER.—Bossuet settles that very easily, by pronouncing it to be the devil. Its seven heads are, according to him, the seven deadly sins. St John says that it stood before the woman. "We must imagine it," says Bossuet, "with gaping jaws, ready to devour the infant." Only imagine strongly enough, and the whole affair is settled. How well this remark illustrates the text ! Lastly, we come to the famous beast which rose up out of the sea. This, it seems, is pagan Rome ; we cannot doubt it. In fact, the beast had seven heads, and pagan Rome persecuted the Church under seven reigns. It had also ten horns ; but how are we to divide ten horns amongst seven heads ? Bossuet gives two horns to each of the three principal emperors, and only one each to the other four.

EUGENE.—This is really too much. It is the height of madness !

THE OFFICER.—Wait a little : you know that this beast resembled a leopard ; that it had the mouth of a lion, and the feet of a bear. Well, is it not perfectly plain ? The leopard, having a changing skin, is the inconstant Maximilian, who leaves aside and then resumes the imperial purple. The bear is Galerian, who resembled a bear in ferocity, and took pleasure in rearing those animals. Again, he came from the north, the country of the bears, as every one knows. Lastly, the lion's jaws represent the mouth of Diocletian, from which issued the bloody edict for the most cruel persecution that Christianity ever suffered.

EUGENE.—I retract my former assertions, and am ashamed of my past admiration. Is it possible that the good sense and the learning of a Bossuet could have recourse to such explanations ?

THE OFFICER.—You remember that the beast was wounded, but that his wound was healed ? Well, the wound inflicted on pagan Rome is the conversion of Constantine ; the cure which restores it to a sort of life is the apostasy of Julian. I ask you, my friends, did the human intellect ever descend so low ?

But that is not all. The second beast which caused the first to speak, is the philosophy of that time, which, being hostile to the Christians, excited the emperors against them.

MYSELF.—You are jesting with us ; such an explanation is impossible.

THE OFFICER.—And do you know what this philosophy is ? It is the new Pythagoreanism and the new Platonism, which returned to enlighten the universe on the ruins of Paganism. It is the philosophy of a Proclus, a Plotin, a Porphyry. Do not look so incredulous. This beast had two horns ; one of these horns, says Bossuet, is Plotin ; the other is Porphyry. We cannot laugh on reading such things. We rather feel an emotion of disgust. Do you not recognise in this that narrow spirit which sees magic and divination in everything which differs from its own doctrine ? An ignorant monk, who had never left his convent, could not have written worse ; and then the childish idea of finding the number 666, the number of the beast, in the numeral letters of the two names Diocletian and Augustus ! If human reason ever went mad, it is here.

EUGENE.—St Irenæus believed that the letters corresponding to this number made up the word *Latineios*, whence the Reformed Church concludes that Antichrist, being a Latin, could be no other than the Pope. The one party, as you see, is not a whit more rational than the other.

THE OFFICER.—I have scarcely the courage to mention the resemblance which Bossuet finds between the two angels armed with scythes, and Alaric and Attila—the one attacking the empire on the east, and the other on the west. I am absolutely afraid to inform you that the beast which is counted as the eighth king is Maximilian, one of the seven emperors, who, having abdicated, resumed the crown, and consequently played the part of an eighth personage. Finally, when pagan Rome has thus furnished by its history a complete mirror of the Apocalyptic events, the New Jerusalem descends from heaven. Bossuet sees in it the mystical city, which the blessed shall inhabit in the skies.

EUGENE.—Why would you have him believe, with the Millennarians, that Jesus Christ will come to resuscitate the bodies of the martyrs, and reign with them for a thousand years in a material city upon the earth ?

THE OFFICER.—The opinion of the Millennarians qualifies them for a mad-house ; while Bossuet's idea of a material judgment upon this earth is altogether erroneous. In taking the Holy City for heaven itself, he insults our reason ; for St John clearly says that it shall be the tabernacle of God *among men*.

EUGENE.—But if you do not consider this as a material city, you must naturally look for the New Jerusalem in heaven.

THE OFFICER.—I look on the Holy City, like that spoken of by Plato in his Republic, as a purified doctrine, which God can, no doubt, communicate to spirits in heaven, but which he cannot, in his goodness, refuse to men who have so much need of it on earth.

MYSELF.—From the few words that you have just said, I think I comprehend the general sense of your theory. Our system, my dear Eugene, is devoid of common sense. I abandon the astrological romance of Dupuis without regret.

EUGENE.—And I give up the graver commentary of Bossuet; but my judgment will only be the more difficult to satisfy. Choose your arguments well, my dear friend. By what I can observe, you are neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant, nor a philosopher of the school of Dupuis; I do not see how I can make room for your opinions in my poor head.

THE OFFICER.—In fact, you must accustom yourself, with me, to consider the subject in such a point of view, that you will at once perceive a sort of second universe included in that which we inhabit. You must be prepared to admit that those scenes which have no parallel either in the history of man or in that of the physical world, may all have their existence in the sensations of man. St John experienced the sensations of a visionary; by that means everything is explained. But we shall resume this subject, if you please, another time; not that I have any great need to prepare my arguments, but because I am not accustomed to long-continued speaking. I hope, however, to see you again tomorrow. We must strike the iron while it is hot.

The officer might have continued to speak for a long time, without my being aware of the fact, absorbed as I was in my reflections. Oh, proud reason! I said to myself, what have you established as certain? Who can say at present, "The truth is there"? Resting on the faith of a celebrated name, I came to seek it here, and I have found only the ravings of delirium. Oh! what humiliation for man! And I, miserable man, believed that I had unravelled the mystery! I was on the point of publishing the history of the progress and the errors of the human mind. What pride in my pretensions! and yet what ignorance in fact! I am tempted to say, like the rejected of the Apocalypse, Ye mountains, fall upon me, and hide my shame. I do not believe in the end of the world as regards others, but I believe in it as regards myself. To me it is the uprooting of all those illusions which reign in the world, and of which I have been so long the dupe.

What! my dear friend, replied Eugene, who had overheard these last words; wherefore these complaints? Is it not ever the case that no sooner is man freed from one error, than he falls into another? I have some confidence in the talent of our

military friend as a demolisher ; but I doubt much his skill as an architect. He is about to build us an edifice, which will crumble to pieces, be assured, like the flimsy structure of Dupuis.

MYSELF.—Oh, as for that, I will not trust him a jot. I will examine his edifice, inch by inch, and I will only choose it for my own when I have proved its stability. Eugene smiled, and I left him, much astonished that any one could be content to remain in a state of doubt with so much equanimity.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION.

ON calling the next morning at Eugene's house, I found the officer already prepared to give us the explanation which both of us awaited so impatiently. Gentlemen, said he, you are now prepared to admit that reason alone is quite unable to give us any explanation of the Apocalypse?

MYSELF.—Certainly; but is it not by reason that you are about to interpret it yourself?

THE OFFICER.—I am led by my reason to acknowledge that St John's reason, when he wrote this book, was not in its usual state.

MYSELF.—I confess I did not expect to hear this. Thus, according to you, St John was mad; this is the explanation of the enigma, then? Having once admitted this, there is no use in afterwards attempting to comprehend the images of the Apocalypse.

THE OFFICER.—St John was not mad, but a seer, or extatic. You both admit that the man who is in a state of extasis—or, in other words, who has visions—is not in the same state as one who is awake. The extatic sees without the assistance of his material eyes. The things of which he speaks have no fixed place nor determinate time; he sees, in a word, what other men do not see; he is in a world in which space and time are unknown.

MYSELF.—That cannot be contradicted. St John, when he wrote his book, was in the condition of a man who dreams; for it must be admitted, I think, that the words "vision" and "dream" are almost synonymous.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely; and as there can be no dream without forms and images, and as the things seen take place in a particular place, it must be admitted that the scene to which the extatic's thoughts are conveyed is an immaterial world. In that world the past, within certain limits, appears to him with all its attendant impressions; and, in like manner, the future also, within fixed limits, presents itself under new colours. We are, at the same moment, in company

with friends whom we have lost ten years before—with men who were fifty years of age when they died, but who now do not appear more than thirty. We are, without comprehending it in the least, at the same instant in China and Mexico, in Europe and in New Zealand. These impressions, however, are not within the domain of reason, which is guided entirely by the senses; and this is why I said that St John, when he wrote his book, was not under the influence of his rational faculties, but under the influence of those impressions which we term dreams, but which are not the less real phenomena connected with the soul.

EUGENE.—They are the junction of the soul with its Principle. Plotin and Porphyrys, of whom we spoke yesterday, have written of this peculiar state, which evidently appears to be a very remarkable mode of perception belonging to human nature. It is not madness, but an exceptional state of existence. In that state, as you very properly remark, the soul is freed from the influence of exterior objects, and the sensations to which they give rise; it escapes from the realm of time and space, in which all our material sensations are irrevocably shut up. Thus St John wrote his Apocalypse when he was in a state of extasis; this I have no difficulty whatever in admitting.

MYSELF.—In fact, looking at the matter in this point of view, we shall find that the images in his book are the exact representation of his ideas when in the ordinary state; just as we see that the objects which occupy us when awake are again brought before us in our dreams. This explanation is extremely simple; we have only to admit that the apostle must have had most singular ideas when he was awake; for, when in a state of vision, he saw most ridiculous images.

THE OFFICER.—You are so clear-sighted, gentlemen, that I need not dwell any longer on preliminaries. With those who had given the subject less thought than yourselves, I should have required a lengthened explanation before convincing them that men may have visions, and that in those visions there is neither fixed time nor fixed space.

EUGENE.—If so, they can never have reflected on their dreams; for, if they had, they would have remarked all that.

THE OFFICER.—Observe, however, that there are very different descriptions of dreams. Those which we have every night are not of the same nature as the dreams of a somnambulist; the somnambulist, although asleep, can speak, write, and even make a lengthened harangue.

MYSELF.—Are you going to tell us seriously that St John was a somnambulist? What a happy idea! Thus he could, in that state, speak and write while still in a state of dream-

ing. That would certainly add a good deal to the probability of his account.

THE OFFICER.—The somnambulist is not the only one who can act in this way. Animal magnetism produces in some people a sort of extasis, in which the person influenced sees without the aid of the eyes, takes long excursions without leaving his couch; in short, lives completely out of the bounds of time and space. Several nervous complaints give rise to the same phenomena.

EUGENE.—Why, all antiquity is full of narratives which confirm your assertion. Amongst the Egyptian hieroglyphics we see figures represented in the position of magnetisers and their patients. The Scriptures speak of the imposition of hands, by means of which man was placed in contact with the spiritual world, since, immediately afterwards, he saw things different from those which he had seen before, and spoke in a very different way from that in which he was accustomed to do in the waking state. The sybils were, I presume, magnetised by exhalations which took effect on their nerves; and in this way they foretold, with more or less truth, events which were still future. After all, foretelling is merely living beyond the region of time, and this is a phenomenon which takes place with all those who are in the state you alluded to.

MYSELF.—I have often remarked that the Gnostics of the first centuries of the Christian Church are said to have had women frequently with them who enacted the part of prophetesses, and announced future events. The Druids also placed great confidence in women of this description. The Romans, too, had their vestals; the Armoricans their priestesses of Sain; the Germans their Velledas. My idea is, that the ancients perceived that the organs of man were susceptible of certain impressions which produced a state of extasis; and that women, as being more impressionable, and possessing a more delicate nervous organisation, were especially suitable for receiving such impressions. St John, who was advanced in years, and weakened by watchings and fastings, was by this means naturally in a state suitable for entering into extasis; and to this circumstance we must attribute the origin of his book.

THE OFFICER.—You are quite right in stating that natural extasis, as well as that artificially produced, is connected with a particular state of the body; for instance, Daniel tells us that after his visions he was quite weak and prostrated. The abstinence and fasting so often recommended by the ancients—both pagans and Jews—were intended to put the body in a state more suitable for receiving spiritual communications. A strict attention to regimen is, even in our own

days, the only means of producing sound or agreeable sleep; while intemperance is sure to entail frightful dreams as its consequence. The common people have a saying that temperance in diet causes us to see angels; and every one knows that over-eating produces nightmare.

MYSELF.—But this brings us to the grossest materialism. What connexion do you find between this and the spiritualism of St John?

THE OFFICER.—I am attempting to prove that the mode of perception which is developed in sleep—whether that sleep be of the usual kind or the extatic sleep—belongs to human nature, and that it is not an illusion of the mind, but a phenomenon produced by a certain management of the human machine. This it is impossible to doubt.

EUGENE.—We shall not attempt to dispute it; but to the point, if you please.

THE OFFICER.—If extasis can be produced in man, he is consequently capable of entering the invisible world. Do you admit this second point?

EUGENE.—Doubtless; that region in which there is neither fixed time nor space must be the immaterial or invisible world.

THE OFFICER.—Or, if you like it better, the spiritual world; at all events, the region, *par excellence*, of the mind. Well, in this spiritual world, in which the future is as the present, since there is no time, properly so called, St John saw, in a state which can be plainly proved to be one of extasis, the future destinies of the Church as if they were present. The Jewish prophets also had their visions, and, in like manner, saw no objects but those of the spiritual order, which, consequently, are quite analogous to those which St John witnessed. Ezekiel, for example, speaks of nothing but those events which were to happen to the Church established in his days; and is it surprising, therefore, that the Apostle John should have been struck with the future events of that Church which he had seen founded? The same images are met with in both prophets, because the two churches really underwent similar changes.

MYSELF.—In fact, I was just about to advance as an objection this striking resemblance between Ezekiel and St John. As both saw and described the same objects, I concluded naturally with Dupuis, my former master, that the latter might have been a plagiarist. You say, on the other hand, that St John saw what Ezekiel saw, and in this way the similarity of their sensations explains the similarity of the images they employ. It is, at all events, an adroit way of getting rid of the difficulty. Let us resume the subject, however. St John, you say, whose mind was deeply occupied with the fate of his Church, saw, in his extasis, its whole history spread out before him?

THE OFFICER.—Pre-occupied, as you say, with the fate of the Christian Church, St John saw its progressive alterations and decay, in a certain period of time which appeared to him to be present. He beheld this Church, founded, like its predecessors, on the worship of God alone, and on the union of faith and love, afterwards degenerate, on the one hand, into a species of Idolatry which in some measure substituted man for God ; and, on the other, into a mere abstract and barren Opinion, in which love was banished to make way for faith alone. After these two causes had brought about the degradation, and, finally, the entire dissolution of the Christian Church, he saw a second one established, which he called the New Jerusalem. This is the whole Apocalypse.

EUGENE.—Why, in truth, this is explaining the Apocalypse by the study of the human heart. In fact, when we are strongly acted upon by a love for the good and the beautiful, we feel full of gratitude towards the Deity, from whom descends every good and perfect gift into the heart of man ; we are warmed with a sacred love—illuminated with a pure life-giving light ; but, little by little, our enthusiasm cools down —(and remember that enthusiasm, in the original signification of the word, signifies “ God within us ”)—by degrees, as I said, our enthusiasm cools, and after having, in the first place, acknowledged that it sprang from God, we fancy it the product of our own thoughts, we imagine it a property of our own being. From this cause first originated that idolatry which you have pointed out. The second cause of degradation was not long in following. The sentiment of devotion, when it loses its love, that is to say, its life, no longer exists save by a sort of memory. We say to ourselves tranquilly, and without any emotion, “ these things are true ; ” and this lukewarm acquiescence of the intellect is faith alone. We are no longer electrified by inspiration—we view faith as something foreign to us, and we pay it the barren allegiance of our intellect, but not of our affections.

THE OFFICER.—What happens to the individual, also happens inevitably to society at large, which is only the individual on a grand scale. The Church—or, in other terms, the communion of religious men—was at first founded on disinterested love and living faith ; but by those downward steps which you have so clearly explained, it at last ended in Idolatry, in which the creature takes the place of the Creator ; and in a barren Faith, by which that which was love in man, is changed into mere opinion. The Jewish Church passed through these two phases ; and the Christian Church has also experienced them. Ezekiel saw and described what subsequently happened to the first ; and St John, in like manner, saw and described the fate of the second. Dupuis says that

St John drew his inspiration from the same astronomical source from which Ezekiel drew his ; and he thus recognises the identity of the two prophecies. I have proved to you that the astrological explanation is wholly without foundation; and, reversing in my turn the *dictum* of Dupuis, I say, with more justice, St John drank at the same extatic source at which Ezekiel quenched his thirst. This, as you will observe, involves no charge of plagiarism; for the same moral events naturally presented similar images to the two visionaries.

MYSELF.—In fact, Ezekiel and St John both set out from the same point, and both arrive at the same result. In both prophecies the end of the present state of things is announced ; in both the earth is afflicted with various plagues. St John describes idolatry under the figure of a harlot ; Ezekiel also figured it by the prostitution of Ahola and Aholibah. The one calls the impure city Babylon, the other gives his the appellation of Tyre. By the first, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is called the great Dragon ; by the other, the enemy of the woman, or the Church, is also termed a Dragon. Both speak of birds of prey as being summoned to eat the flesh of the conquered ; to both appear Gog and Magog. The New Jerusalem has twelve gates, and an angel measures them with a reed ; while the holy city spoken of by the prophet of the Old Testament, is also measured by an angel, and has twelve chambers. Lastly, in both there are living waters, and trees for the healing of the nations. Ezekiel says that his last city is called "The Lord with it." St John ends the Apocalypse by saying—"The Lord be with you."

THE OFFICER.—It is the same prayer which I offer up myself ; and I doubt not that He will enlighten you, if you are anxious for the light. With men of candid and well-informed minds, such an analogy as that just described must produce a powerful effect. Do you not see in both these descriptions, two churches commencing and ending in the same manner, after having experienced the same vicissitudes. When God establishes a church on earth, my friends, he places in it Love and Wisdom ; but by degrees men become wearied of these blessings. The sufferings which man entails upon himself by deviating from the straight path, are represented as plagues, which he supposes sent from heaven ; while the forgetfulness of God, and that inclination to deify everything which is presented to our senses, leads us to indolence and idolatry—the frightful prostitution of that immortal soul which ought to have no other bridegroom but God himself. Barren faith alone established itself amongst the carnal Jews, as it has since done among merely speculative Christians. Lastly, as it is the invariable attribute of Divine Goodness to come to the assistance of im-

pure and narrow-minded man, God in all ages holds out to us a succouring hand, no matter how deep the abyss may be into which we are sunk. By the mouth of Ezekiel he promised Christianity to the fallen Jews, and by the voice of St John he announced the New Jerusalem to degenerate Christians. Does not this view present the Apocalypse to you in a clear light?

MYSELF.—It is beyond doubt that man is ever prone to abuse the gifts which he receives from on high. No sooner is he in possession of happiness, than he abandons it, led away by the false promptings of his mind or tempted by his selfishness. The ancients perceived the truth which you have just pointed out, when they said that in the primitive state of man there was an age of gold, afterwards an age of silver, after that an age of brass, and finally an age of iron. Thus the degradations you speak of are proved by ancient tradition as well as by the study of the human heart. You, however, announce this age of gold as again to return, and in this you differ from antiquity. Your doctrine is the more consoling.

THE OFFICER.—Never was the age of gold lost to humanity, that its return was not, at the same time, promised. The entire East is filled with books which foretell a better state of things to the human race, sunk in degradation. The sibylline books, at the period of the foundation of Rome, apprised the inhabitants of Italy of this great mystery. Virgil, in his *Pollio*, unwittingly acts the part of a prophet of the golden age, which is ready, he says, to reappear on earth. The Persians and Scandinavians foretold a mystical city which was to appear in the latter times, and form an abode for all good men.

MYSELF.—Thus, cities similar to the New Jerusalem have formed the theme of prophets in all countries; and the history traced in the Apocalypse is only, in another form, that which has been announced by the extatics of all ages, as well as by poets and cosmogonists. In this point of view the Apocalypse assumes a loftier aspect to the human mind. We may meditate on it without sinking into superstition, and may confess to studying it without any danger of falling in public opinion. It is a pity that at the commencement you were imprudent enough to refer to the Protestants and Roman Catholics of our own day; had it not been for that, I would at once be inclined to adopt your interpretation.

THE OFFICER.—I have already said that barren Faith and Idolatry are the two real causes of the degradation of the Church; I hope that on this point we are agreed. Well, now you ask why I characterise certain men, called Protestants and Roman Catholics, as those who are in barren faith alone and in idolatry; but I assure you I wash my hands altogether of this classification. I only speak of those belonging to the two

communions who openly make such a profession of faith. The one loudly proclaims faith alone as essential to salvation, and even condemns good works when done with a view to this end; the others, by endowing a human pontiff with a privilege which belongs only to the Deity, really give rise to idolatry, when they might merely have established a wise government in the Church. Now, the Holy Scripture is God himself. I do not mean to say that the last judgment took place because there were Roman Catholics and Protestants; I merely assert that idolatry and barren faith, being in embryo in the Christian religion as they were in all the preceding ones, brought about the end of the Church; and that, in order not to leave the world without a guide, Divine Providence founded a new one. History proves that this has been already done several times. Why should we not see it again take place in our own day? The human heart, in the present day, is sunk in sin as it was formerly; Christians have displayed the same tendencies to evil that the Jews did. That those Christians who have fallen away, from the causes I have mentioned, happen to bear the name of Protestants, or Roman Catholics, matters not in the least; names have nothing to do in the matter.

EUGENE.—I really can find no objection to what you state; our Lord himself announced the end of the Church which he founded, when he said that in the latter days there should be no faith or charity on earth. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that this period should arrive, and to each of us individually it happens only too often. Well, when I look around me in the world, I see faith extinct where it is no longer free, and charity banished by that denial of it which is everywhere prevalent; have I not a right, therefore, to say that the events predicted in the Apocalypse may really have taken place?

THE OFFICER.—Observe, that those who assert that the primitive Christian Church cannot be entirely corrupted, because it is the work of God, are completely refuted by this prophecy of our Saviour's; for, according to it, it is clear that a time will come when this will take place, as, in fact, it does every day with each of us. In the present day, when short-sighted individuals are looking for the end of the material world as contemporaneous with the last judgment, I, for my part, look only for the end of true Christian faith in society or in individuals, as a token that it has taken place. Now, society is in this way at its end, and presents a striking resemblance to the Jewish Church in the times of our Saviour. Jesus told his disciples to obey his commands, and not to follow the example of those who sat in the seat of Moses. Which of us has not felt inclined to apply the same phraseology to the preachers of the present day? God, in human form, said of the priests

of his time that they devoured the substance of the widow and the orphan, and for a pretext made long prayers. I do not like comparisons, I confess, particularly when they are unfavourable; but, in all truth, who has not lamented this trafficking in prayers which takes place in the present day, the souls purchased out of Purgatory by money paid on earth? The Scribes and Pharisees loved the first places in the synagogue; and can we not find some in the present day who answer to this description? Jesus taught us that we should call no one on earth our father in a spiritual sense; and yet a human pontiff receives the adoration of his subjects under this very title. Lastly, if it is true that God alone, according to the Apocalypse, should be termed holy, why is it that the Pope is, by his very office, styled "his holiness"? I do not wish to dwell longer on this part of the subject, gentlemen. I assure you I have no prejudice in the matter; but if the clergy of our own day so frequently resemble those of the latter ages of the Jewish Church, am I not justified in concluding that the same symptoms appearing in the two churches point to a similar degradation? What may be fairly termed Idolatry is plainly visible amongst those holding the Roman Catholic faith; whilst the degeneracies of barren Faith are no less discoverable amongst Protestants. Already we see, in fact, the greater number of the Protestants attaching less and less importance to dogmas, and limiting themselves in their exhortations almost wholly to simple morality. Religion is to them a matter of pure faith; it is openly admitted to be such; the understanding can reap no nourishment from it, while outward acts cannot make it bear fruit. According to the very teaching of the learned men of this system, man, with reference to divine things, is like a stock or stone, incapable of comprehending them, and is still more incapable of applying them to practice, and of converting them into works without defiling them with personal interest. What can we say to such a religion? It resolves itself into the vague and barren opinion that we are saved by confessing that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, and trusting to his merits. To dwell further on this subject would only be to insult your understandings.

MYSELF.—We do not require you to do so. We are convinced that the religion at present established on earth has, like its predecessors, ended in Idolatry on the one hand, and in barren Faith on the other. I am merely embarrassed to know why St John saw the first under the emblem of a wicked city, and the other under that of a dragon. You do with regard to the Apocalypse what Touquet has done for the Gospel; you prove it to be both moral and probable; but the figures it contains are left without explanation. It must be admitted that

those beasts of the Apocalypse are dreadful stumbling-blocks. What terrible guardians are those which St John has placed to prevent the profane intellect from entering his garden of the Hesperidés! You have proved to us that the beast with seven heads and ten horns is neither the whale of the constellations, nor the three emperors divided by Bossuet in order to compose its monstrous form. What is your theory, then, respecting it?

THE OFFICER.—You ask me, in fact, why St John saw ideas which are purely mental under forms which seem to belong only to the matter. In order to clear up this difficulty, we must go back to that theory of visions which we have already established, and from which this little digression has led us aside. A man who dreams, sees some object in his dream, that cannot be denied; the extatic also sees some object in his state of extasis. Question somnambulists, cataleptics, those, in short, who have visions, and who are subject to hallucinations, and they will tell you—"I see faith, I see love, hatred, doubt," &c. Mental qualities are represented in their eyes under particular images.

EUGENE.—Wait for a moment. There are seers or visionaries who see images which do not by any means refer to mental qualities; on the contrary, they see trees, fruits, animals, birds. That puts me in mind that a friend of mine, who is a physician, was called in to attend a young English girl subject to these mystical ideas. This young person, when on her death-bed, saw beautiful birds of all colours, which she described to her mother, thinking, alas! that these objects existed in Paradise, to which she was transported in her diseased imagination.

THE OFFICER.—I must stop you in my turn; her body might have been enfeebled by disease, without her mind having been so; and that exquisite sensibility, and that clear state of the reasoning faculties, which the dying are often observed to possess, refute your opinion, and justify mine. It proves, in fact, that the body and soul are in an inverse ratio to each other as regards spiritual communications, and that it is when the former is less absorbed in material existence, that the second, retiring as it were within itself, shines with brighter radiance. The ancients, who were closer observers than we are, frequently remarked this. It was on this principle that the rigid abstinence of the Egyptian priests and the philosophers of the school of Pythagoras was founded. The book which bears the name of Hermes Trismegistus as its author, and the treatise of Porphyry on abstinence, place this truth in the clearest light. The ancient Indian theology, also, is intimately connected with it; and, in fact, it is the essential condition of extasis to be as much as possible

detached from earthly things and the influence of the senses.

EUGENE.—I had not remarked that ; I feel gratified by your explanation ; but my objection still remains in full force. Why did the sick person, of whom I spoke, see birds, which are not moral beings I presume ?

THE OFFICER.—Was your invalid's mind, before her visions took place, absorbed with worldly interests ?

EUGENE.—On the contrary, she was solely occupied with moral and religious ideas.

THE OFFICER.—Then we must conclude that moral or mental beings, as we have distinguished them just now, completely filled her thoughts. Well, these beings, before they could become personified or assume a body, were necessarily obliged to present themselves to her under images borrowed from nature ; for there are no other images possible. You are surprised at those birds which she saw ; but be assured they were the representations assumed, without her knowledge, by the pious meditations which then filled her mind. I can readily imagine how an extatic who is thinking of a lofty intellect will naturally see an eagle ; while he to whose mind the idea of gentleness is presented will see a dove.

MYSELF.—This is rather difficult ; but I think I can partly understand it. All the forms which we meet with in fable are in fact moral sentiments personified ; and I am quite as willing to believe that extatics were merely the first to perceive this connexion, as to conclude that it was established arbitrarily and without reference to any fixed law. This mode of looking at the subject would tend very much to elevate our ideas of it. If, in fact, you suppose fable the calm invention of a student in his study, you can comprehend nothing of its nature, but if, on the contrary, you picture to yourself the forms and metamorphoses of which it speaks as perceived in this way by extatics, an air of truth and probability is at once imparted to the whole subject.

EUGENE.—As we have been forced to recognise the existence of a state of extasis, we are equally obliged to confess that the seer *thinks* of nothing that he does not forthwith *see*. Endeavour to think of some object, and you will find yourself immediately surrounded by images which are, as it were, the translation of your thought into form. It is long since I have become convinced how futile are the efforts of those who endeavour to look upon mental beings as simple metaphysical abstractions. We have a natural desire to personify everything, to characterise everything by forms.

THE OFFICER.—It is really delightful, gentlemen, to explain anything to you ; for you yourselves perform the greater part of the task. I have little else to do than to follow you, for a

single hint is sufficient to put you on the track. Since you are both agreed that there can be no moral quality without some manifestation or other, and no object without a form, extatics, whose peculiar mode of sensations you admit, cannot have experienced, felt, or comprehended anything in their spiritual excursions, that they did not clothe with an image. This image, which to them is really a sensation, is to us a symbol, and these symbols, as bearing a necessary relation to the thoughts of the visionary, have a fixed signification.

MYSELF.—Most certainly. Each image which the extatic sees is, as it were, a word in a language peculiar to himself; to him it is a language absolutely seen, if I may so express myself; and to understand what he means, we must translate it into our spoken language. Thus, underneath the image of the eagle, of which we spoke just now, we should write the word "intellect;" and underneath the dove, the word "gentleness." In the heathen mythology, for example, when I see the image of an olive-tree, I read the word "peace." The oak expresses force; whilst flowers, birds, and even rocks, are emblems which have a fixed meaning. Thus, we may read the Apocalypse with as little difficulty as the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. It is only requisite, in order to do so, to be acquainted with the vocabulary of the extatic, and the matter is done.

EUGENE.—Not so fast, if you please. I admit all that you have just said; but I cannot be satisfied with probabilities, I wish for absolute truth. I am quite willing to believe that St John may have had visions; but who will assure me that they are divine? For, after all, they may probably be only dreams like my own, which have neither beginning nor end. In the second place, how shall I know whether the interpreter is mistaken or not? I am anxious that there should be nothing arbitrary in the explanation of the emblems; but, on the contrary, that each word of this language should have a fixed and precise meaning. It is for want of taking terms in their true acceptation, that there are so many errors in our works on morality.

MYSELF.—You are right. The good wives of my neighbourhood say that when we dream of a spider it is a sign of money. Now, if you endeavour to submit this to any fixed rule, you will find it impossible. It is not enough, therefore, for you to tell us that the beasts seen by St John signify such or such a thing; you must also give us the reason, otherwise the whole thing is arbitrary.

THE OFFICER.—What you require calls for some preliminary explanations. I shall proceed to give you a rule which will enable you to ascertain that the visions of St John are true, and that my explanations are not arbitrary. Grant me your

undivided attention. There is one universal principle of everything which exists, namely, God—

EUGENE.—Oh, there is no use in going back so far ; if the Apocalypse was as clear to us as this truth, we should ask for no explanation concerning it.

THE OFFICER.—In God there are two faculties. Observe, I say two, and for us, at least, there are neither more nor less. The first is Love, the second is Wisdom. This first is the Divine Being in his Essence ; the second is the manifestation of this Being, or his Existence. To the first belong the attributes of goodness and justice ; to the second, intellect and providence.

EUGENE.—In fact, I cannot see any but these two primitive attributes in God. It was by love that he created the world—that he caused it to emanate from himself ; it was by wisdom that he arranged and harmonised it. Love produced everything ; wisdom put everything in order.

THE OFFICER.—From Love proceeded all the good which exists ; from Wisdom all the truth. Thus the Good and the True—that immense, that universal duality—have sprung from the duality of the Creator. The good and the true have found two receptacles in man ; the good, or love, in that one of our two faculties which philosophers call the Will ; the truth, or wisdom, in that which bears the name of the Understanding.

EUGENE.—Nothing can be more precise ; and remark that there are not in man either any other than these two primordial faculties. All the others, in fact, resolve themselves into these. To the will belong the affections of all degrees ; to the understanding the thoughts of every description. However, we must take care not to conclude that this is all which exists. If there is a principle of good, there is also a source of Evil ; if there is truth, there is also falsehood. Your duality in the moral order has a counterpart, and this we must not lose sight of.

THE OFFICER.—Your interruptions, instead of delaying, only advance us. I was just about myself to speak of this counterpart. If there is good, there is also evil. Yes, that is doubtless true respecting the present state of things ; but at the commencement, when everything issued from the hand of God, there could have been nothing but good ; evil was a subsequent effect, one which time brought in its train. Besides, evil is not a being ; it commenced with the wicked, by their turning aside from good, by their derangement of the normal order. The moment when man turned away from his Creator—when he made himself his own god, and forgot that he was the receptacle of the Divine love—he produced evil in his will, and falsehood in his understanding.

MYSELF.—Bravo! my friend; your theory is precision itself. In fact, we must look at evil in this point of view, or else we fall into Manichæism. Now, Manichæism is absolute folly, if ever there was such a thing; for I presume that no sensible person believes in a Devil, and that Devil the rival of God himself. To escape from this difficulty, we must either say with you, that evil commenced with man, who abused the free will which was given him by God, and turned aside from his Creator; or else we must say that there is no other evil, and no other good, than the struggle of winter against summer, of darkness against light—a combat so well represented by Oromazes and Ahrimanes amongst the Persians, and by the Lamb of spring and the northern Dragon in the celestial chart.

EUGENE.—I see already that your Lamb and your Dragon of the constellations are going to turn out most precise emblems; but here I am led to dwell on the fall of man, which is not only spoken of in Genesis, but is found to be the groundwork of all ancient traditions.

THE OFFICER.—And without which religion would be useless. If, in fact, evil did not exist, we should live entirely in God. The end of religion is to unite us, to reconnect us to him; and, in its establishment, this religion still retains that character of duality which I have pointed out to you in man and in his Creator. In fact, the whole of religion consists in Faith, by which the understanding becomes enlightened with the truths of divine wisdom; and in Charity, by means of which our will becomes warmed with the affections which are inspired by divine love.

MYSELF.—If St John's revelations were all as rational as that, there would not be much difficulty in reading them.

THE OFFICER.—And yet this is all that they amount to. He treats of nothing but the good and the true, of evil and falsehood, as I think I shall be able to prove to you plainly. But we must first subdivide this duality into three degrees, which I am now about to lay before you. When you see any effect whatever produced, you admit that there are in this Effect the Cause which produced it, and the End proposed by it. In all things you find these three degrees. Everywhere you perceive the intention or the end which love proposes to itself; the cause, or the means by which wisdom acts; and, lastly, the effect, which at once renders manifest the two other degrees, and includes them.

EUGENE.—Let us endeavour to get rid of this metaphysical disquisition. Your three degrees simply amount to this, I presume, that the two universal principles with which you have made us acquainted, are merely two creations of the fancy, unless they become sensible to us by action or effect.

And this is very probable. God is love and wisdom ; that is quite true ; but before we can conceive of him as such, he must manifest himself to us. The third degree is the basis of, and includes the two others, as the action in man includes and renders manifest his will and his understanding. And, applying this to religion, we perceive in it likewise these three things—faith, charity, and good works.

THE OFFICER.—You have hit it. The good and the true, subdivided into three degrees, is the whole key to the Apocalypse, as it is to the entire Bible. You must remember, however, that these three degrees may bear different names ; unless this be kept in mind, you will get puzzled and confused. Thus the first degree, in which is the end, the intention, the determining affection, which is concealed in the interior, is called the *intimate* or *essence*. The second degree, to which is referable the cause—the thought which examines and deliberates—is the *means*. The third, in which the effects are manifested to the outward senses, we may call the *extremes*. I give you this nomenclature, because it will assist you to comprehend fully the symbols used by extatics. This division into three is applied by them to God, to man, to religion, and heaven itself. St Paul says that there are three heavens. The extatic, applying the scale of degrees to this classification, sees in the first the celestial, properly so called ; in the second, the spiritual ; and in the third, the natural. The divisions which you have just seen, prove to you how love, when it predominates, constitutes the celestial degree ; the understanding, or the mind, the spiritual ; the love of actions, or effects, the natural degree. Fix this duality and this trinity carefully in your mind, for these are the only things which will require any effort of the mind.

MYSELF.—I confess that there are so many terms in your two tables, that I really cannot fix them accurately in my mind.

THE OFFICER.—Give me a scrap of paper, and I will endeavour to put them down in their order :

GOD IS ONE !

Dividing him in thought, we can only conceive him as

LOVE.		WISDOM.
From love arises the Good.		From wisdom results Truth.

MAN, CREATED BY GOD,

Receptacle of God, has two faculties :

THE WILL,		THE UNDERSTANDING,
Seat of the affections.		Origin of the thoughts.

Turning away from God, man has produced :

EVIL,		FALSEHOOD,
Which is good in relation to self: Self-interest.		Which is degenerated truth, accom- modated to depraved love.

In order to reunite fallen man to himself, God has given religion,
which consists in these two things:

Or, the love of good in the sight of God.	CHARITY,	Or, the divine truth received in the intellect.	FAITH,
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You see that this hasty sketch of mine, in which the lowest link of the chain is reunited to the first—a state of things which constitutes religion—renders the *duality* sensible to you; the following is a second table, in which these two elements of all things are divided according to the three degrees.

There are in all things—

THE END, or the object proposed.	THE CAUSE, by which we act.	THE EFFECT, or the action manifested.
<i>The End</i> is the first degree, the supreme, the intimate.	<i>The Cause</i> is the second, or the means.	<i>The Effect</i> is the third, or extreme.
LOVE is the principle of the end.	WISDOM, the cause which executes.	ACTION, the manifestation of the two others.
<i>The Will</i> in man proposes an end to itself.	<i>The Understanding</i> considers the means of attaining this end.	<i>The Work</i> manifests the will and the thought of man.
<i>Charity</i> is the principle of religion.	<i>Faith</i> is the means of guiding charity.	<i>Good Works</i> constitute living religion.

These two tables give you absolutely all the moral ideas which are contained in the book of St John; there is not one which cannot be referred to it.

MYSELF.—Give me a moment to study your two tables. How! are there no more principal terms than these? It seems to me, on the contrary, that there are a crowd of images in the Apocalypse. By multiplying the eight terms in the first table by the three in the second, I find that there are only twenty-four principal words. Is that enough to enable us to read the books of the extatics with facility?

EUGENE.—You are surely jesting. Are not the twenty-four letters of the alphabet, by their combinations, sufficient to produce all the books in this library? But now that we have this mental vocabulary, it remains for you to furnish us with the translation of it in the images of the Apocalypse. Extatics, I fully believe, see nothing but good and evil, truth and falsehood, in all their degrees; but, to convince us of the reality of their statements on the subject, we require to understand the exact relation between your vocabulary and theirs.

THE OFFICER.—There are but few principal terms in my vocabulary, whilst theirs is as immense as nature itself. Before we can comprehend the signification of one of their images, we must see what place it occupies in the narrative, for it is frequently the place alone which determines its value. For example, in the natural sense, the heat of the sun gives life to

nature, but it also scorches it. In the first case, it is the evident emblem of good ; in the second, it may be taken for the equally truthful symbol of evil. Man, you are aware, calls that good which seems so to himself ; but this is frequently evil to others. This selfish good, therefore, he presents under the image which we usually employ to denote absolute good ; it is our acquaintance with the individual which enables us to decide whether we are to stamp what he tells us with the character of good and truth, or of evil and falsehood. The knowledge of the human heart determines the value of the words of men, and the knowledge of the scene of action with which extasis makes us acquainted, is equally necessary to enable us to comprehend the images which the extatic perceives. Pay particular attention to this. I shall now enter into some details respecting the principal emblems ; the others we will consider as they are presented to our attention in their order.

EUGENE AND MYSELF.—We are all ears.

THE OFFICER.—My moral theory, I hope, is not an arbitrary one, and you are now about to see whether the images seen by visionaries harmonise perfectly with it. When the extatic carries with him into his peculiar world the thought of the Divine Being, since a metaphysical object cannot be presented to the sight, a real object, one and sole, like God himself, and, like him, the source of life, offers itself to his view—a Spiritual Sun diffuses light and heat on all sides in the immaterial world. This sun of the spirit has formed part, as you are aware, of all systems of cosmogony. All philosophers, commencing with Plato, speak of it ; all poets have sung of it ; and Virgil, when describing Elysium, says plainly that this delightful abode has its sun and its stars. Scripture speaks everywhere of this mysterious orb. Malachi calls it the sun of justice. It is it which Ezekiel saw, and which was present to the eyes of David when he said that God had established his dwelling in the sun.

MYSELF.—This is certainly not an invention of your own, at all events. The slightest acquaintance with the authors of antiquity, proves that they, too, had their spiritual sun. Martianus Capella and the Emperor Julian have addressed hymns to it, which are widely celebrated ; and the Neo-Platonicians, amongst others Plotinus, in his *Enneades*, speaks of it in every page. Whether this belief of the ancients was based on truth or not, I do not know ; but what I do know is, that it was their unanimous belief. Our every-day language itself supports ancient tradition on this point ; all our mystics tell us that the spiritual star has risen in their hearts.

EUGENE.—But is this not a metaphor ?

THE OFFICER.—The first persons who employed this image

were extatics, as the remains of the most remote antiquity prove clearly to us. In all these God and the sun are synonymous. Now, extatics do not invent metaphors; they write down their impressions. If this is not so, we must also take as metaphors all those figures of every description which they have employed in the same way as the symbolic orb. But this hypothesis cannot be supported for a moment. We must, therefore, conclude that we are transported into the world of extatics, a world which is at once the source and the emblem of ours. We shall consequently be led to remark the complete parallel between the two.

EUGENE.—But this leads us away from St John, and into the poetic world of Plato.

THE OFFICER.—As we have seen that there are two faculties in God—Love and Wisdom—extatics, in their sensations, have substituted for these two attributes those belonging to the Sun of the Blessed. Love they have called Heat; Wisdom or truth, Light. And observe that our usual language, in fact, has retained the impress of those ancient traditions. We say every day that love warms us, that truth enlightens us. The colours proceeding from this light serve us as emblems of the moral sentiments; white represents truth; red, love; while black, which is the absence of all light, is everywhere the symbol of darkness and ignorance. Still further, the connexion between this sun and the spiritual nature, has served as the type of the relation between man and God. Man, in approaching God, is at the same time warmed and enlightened at the source of all light and heat, and the moment he removes from it, coldness and death take possession of him.

MYSELF.—What a vivid light you throw on the subject! If there be a spiritual sun—and of this we cannot entertain a doubt—it is this sun, doubtless, and not the material sun, as Dupuis would make us believe, that received in bygone ages the adoration of men. The passing of the sun into our hemisphere, and its subsequent retiring from it, may very well represent the actions of men with respect to the Deity. To adopt this conclusion, we only require to be convinced that the celestial chart was the work of extatics, and not of astrologers.

THE OFFICER.—You now perceive why we both agreed that the parallel of Dupuis was correct merely in its general outline. In fact, what does this outline present to us? The struggle between evil and good. Evil is the privation of God's presence, as Good is that presence. As the departure of the sun brings darkness and cold, or the empire of Ahrimanes, to man, is it not a correct emblem of evil? And does not the return of the sun to our hemisphere, bringing with it heat and life,

form a striking figure of the supreme Good warming and vivifying the heart of man by his presence? Of one thing you may be fully convinced, that the celestial chart was the production of men of the most ancient times. History gives us no information as to its origin. When it was created, men spoke only by symbols, as all systems of cosmogony, and all mythology we are acquainted with, prove plainly. Is it not natural to believe that those who wrote their symbols in all the books with which we are acquainted, on all the buildings which still exist, also wrote them on the celestial vault. Extasis was the primitive mode of perception, when man was more closely united to his Author. As, in the early ages of the world, he held frequent communications with the principle of his being, what he perceived in these spiritual communications form the subject of his writings and his teachings. When evil came to interrupt those spiritual communications, men became degenerated, and ceasing to believe in the invisible world, they looked upon the images bequeathed to them by their ancestors as merely the representations of physical objects. Not understanding that those objects were figures or symbols, they took them literally, and established the worship of material, in place of the worship of an uncreated, nature. The symbols remained, but their meaning was lost.

EUGENE.—Your supposition, if it is one, at least resembles truth; and the proof is, that all the remains of antiquity bear tokens of a spirit of mysticism, which could not have had its origin in anything but spiritual communication. The Indians and Egyptians were naturally prone to contemplation. The theocratic form of government seems to have been general throughout the whole of Asia; and it is singular enough to find it reigning at the two extremes of that vast continent—namely, Japan and Judea.

THE OFFICER.—Add to this, that astrology, according to Lucien, who studied its origin with great care, was the work of the first kings who existed, and these kings, he says, were very religious.

MYSELF.—This is not conjecture, my dear Eugene; it is truth itself. The sphere, says Dupuis himself, contains in a material form all that the intellectual world contains spiritually; the dispute, therefore, is narrowed to this one point—which of the two worlds represents the other? For myself, I believe firmly that moral truth was the first, and was the one symbolised. The symbol came after the reality, which is quite natural. Moreover, if mythology was the work of those extatics, of whom our friend speaks, I have no difficulty whatever in believing that the astrological sphere, which is a sort of mythology, was taken from the same source. Oromazes and Ahrimanes, the symbols of good and evil, could not have had

any other representations in the eyes of extatics but light and darkness, heat and cold. But I am still a little puzzled with regard to the animals of the celestial sphere.

THE OFFICER.—I shall proceed with my explanation, and all this will become plain as you go on. The spiritual sun was not God himself; it was merely his envelope. The Deity, when manifesting himself to the eyes of extatics, assumed as his form the most perfect of all forms, I mean that of man. The Pagans were acquainted with no other gods but those who bore the human figure. Philosophers dislike the idea of a god assuming any appearance whatever; but as there are no ideas without a form, extatics, who did not reason like our metaphysicians, necessarily saw some object, and that which they did see was the type form, the form which produces all the others. Extasis could not have been impressed with an abstraction, since you agree with me that extasis is a mode of seeing.

EUGENE.—Doubtless; prophets formerly were called *seers*.

THE OFFICER.—God, when making himself apparent, could not be manifested except under the most perfect form of life with which we are acquainted. The hieroglyphic of the Deity, therefore, among the ancients, was man in his most beautiful form. From no other source did the divine writers obtain their type of the absolutely beautiful. In Genesis, we are told that man was created after the image of God; therefore God is the model, the type of humanity. Let me not be told that this refers simply to a moral likeness. I repeat, that there is nothing mental without an object. We are always brought back to this starting-point.

MYSELF.—But what about the animals seen by extatics?

THE OFFICER.—If man is the creature *par excellence*—the monarch of the universe, the image of the Creator—it is because the human form, in its original type, is that which has organised and vivified everything after its own nature. All beings are recipients of God, as all bodies are receptacles of the light of the sun; and as light is reflected from the latter more or less perfectly, in the same way the action of God—the moulding influence—is received by his creatures in different degrees. If his reception is complete, it produces an image conformable to himself, which is man; while a less complete reception of him presents us only with the forms of the lower animals. The latter are plainly successive degradations of the human form. It is by taking away something from this form that we come, in the first place, to those animals designated as the most perfect; by taking away something more, we arrive at animals less perfect still; and by continuing to descend in the scale of beings, we at last reach forms so widely different, and so inferior, that they have scarcely more relation

to man than the most simple elements of life. From the polypus, in a word, there is an ascending chain of life, which no reasonable or impartial observer can fail to observe.

MYSELF.—This is natural history of a better stamp than that which Bossuet makes us acquainted with when speaking of the locusts. Your chain of beings is rigorously demonstrable; and if the perfection of the material organs denote the perfection of the moral sentiments, of which they are the seat, we must also admit that the imperfection of these same organs, as they are presented to us in the lower classes of the animal kingdom, must represent low, ignoble, or vulgar sentiments.

THE OFFICER.—Not always ignoble, or mean, but incomplete. The extatic, who is filled with a peculiar sentiment, sees the expression of this sentiment under the figure of that being of which it is the characteristic; in this way all the shades of moral life have their symbols in material beings. Our popular language, to which I occasionally appeal, characterises gluttony by the figure of a pig, cruelty by that of a tiger, and voracity by that of a hound.

EUGENE.—The companions of Ulysses, who, we are told, were changed into swine, appeared thus to that prince, perhaps, because Circe, whom Homer calls a magician, had developed in them that double sight which is so characteristic of extatics. Your idea is truly an original one. I am no longer surprised at those strange figures which all visionaries perceive. They are the figures which the vices and faults of men assume in their eyes.

THE OFFICER.—Do not let us proceed so fast. It is no doubt so, frequently; but sometimes extatics see noble and generous, nay, even divine sentiments, under the forms of animals. The animal expresses that which is wanting to the completeness of man. The absolutely good and true in the first degree is God himself, and appears to the extatic under the human form. This good, and this truth, in the subsequent degree, lose something of their completeness, and appear to him under a form of life less complete. Lastly, in the third degree, or that in which extatics are subject to their natural impressions, they see, and cannot do otherwise than see, divine things, as well as spiritual, under forms inferior to that of the type form. It was thus that St John, in his Apocalypse, being most frequently transported to the lowest degree of the spiritual world, in which those lived on whom the judgment was pronounced, was therefore surrounded only by symbols taken from the lower class of natural objects, or, in a word, from secondary organisations. The Divine Word itself considered with respect to the Letter, which is the lowest degree, assumes the appearance of life, but of a life lower than that of man. This, however, is perhaps too profound for you at present, and we

shall come to it in its proper place subsequently. I shall now briefly sum up what I have said. The incomplete or lower sentiments assume, in the eyes of extatics, the figures of the lower animals as their emblems. All these emblems are to them types of moral life, which types cannot be seized or grasped without the forms which they present. Thus God, when considered in his Human Nature, which he assumed in time, and, by so doing, descended into the extremes or lowest degree of the creation, is represented in the Apocalypse by the forms of animals. He is there represented by turns as a lamb and as a white horse. The lamb is the emblem of innocence; the horse is the emblem of understanding; and the white colour signifies there that the understanding is raised to a perception of the truth.

MYSELF.—Into what a surprising world have you introduced us! These few words have almost enabled me to read the whole Apocalypse. I already begin to see in those hideous beasts, with their repulsive forms and grovelling appetites, the symbols of evil; while those gentle and docile animals, whose forms produce a pleasing effect, awaken in us the impressions of affections as gentle and pleasing as themselves. This horse which you present to me as the symbol of intellect, has been looked on as such by all antiquity. The Sun had horses, and Apollo his Pegasus.

EUGENE.—And sacred lore, my friend, is even more plain upon this point. The prophets speak repeatedly of horses and their riders. In fact, if we succeed in clearing up the difficulties of the Apocalypse, we shall, at the same time, be enabled to understand those of the Old Testament, and indeed of the whole Bible.

MYSELF.—If so, it would be strong presumptive evidence that your system was a sound one; for, to explain the Bible, the heathen mythology, and the celestial sphere, in accordance with good sense, learning, and philosophy, is assuredly to progress in the right direction. But I still return to these animals of the constellations.

THE OFFICER.—And these are precisely what refute the system advanced by Dupuis. If those who first traced the celestial chart had been astronomers, they would have filled it with straight or circular lines, and, in short, would have presented it as a geometrical figure. In place of that, we see animals which have no connexion with the configuration of the stars, and figures, the signification of which no person has been able to explain. Is it not a very simple deduction to conclude that, being the work of religious men of the most remote antiquity, it must be in harmony with the revelations of extatics in all ages? The birth of the sun at Christmas, and his passing into our hemisphere at Easter, do not in this way

surprise you : for is it not natural that the sun, the image of the Deity, should express the relations established between the Deity and man ? But I say, further, and I will maintain it against all opposition, that the animals of the sphere themselves were not placed there without a particular intention. To extatics, the good, or God in the lowest degree of the spiritual world, appears as a lamb ; while evil, according to them, is the serpent, as you may see by reference to Genesis, which is quoted by St John. Well, I assert that they placed the lamb at the spring equinox, and the serpent at the autumnal one, in order to represent by this prophetic and moral picture the great event of the fall, and the redemption of man. The celestial chart, gentlemen, is a prophetic book, as well as those of Moses. Moses speaks of the serpent, which represents sin ; the celestial chart has placed it opposite to the celestial good, which vivifies all nature. And see how the theory of forms explains fully this choice of the serpent as symbolising evil ; he crawls on his belly, whilst man raises his erect head, and gazes at the heavens. Do not these two beings present striking emblems of two great attributes, the one of God or man himself ; the other of Evil or nothingness—man occupying the perpendicular or celestial line, and the serpent the horizontal or terrestrial one ?

MYSELF.—You will bewilder us with your digressions. I cannot, however, refuse to acquiesce in this proof. It has been fully demonstrated to my satisfaction that the Mosaic revelation was not the first, but that a previous revelation had already diffused light over the cradle of humanity. This revelation, which was doubtless given after the fall of man, is attested by the discoveries made every day by those learned in Oriental antiquities. All our philosophers, beginning with Bruker, have been obliged to admit the existence of a primitive nation, which must have enlightened ancient Asia. This is now more than a mere hypothesis. If, then, there was a primitive revelation, since there is only one God for all ages, it cannot have spoken of any but Him, his present and future acts ; and as, in like manner, there is only one great fact which really interests the human race—I mean the Fall and Redemption of man—this all-important subject must have been the groundwork of all the cosmogonies, and all the traditions, which extatics, gifted with the power of seeing into futurity, have bequeathed to us.

EUGENE.—How far we have already advanced, my dear friend ! I would merely suggest one other idea, gentlemen, which is, that those philosophers and learned men who attempt to prove that the Bible is a plagiarism, because all the sacred books of other nations resemble it, are mistaken. Those books may have been written before it, without interfering

in the least with our hypothesis ; in fact, they merely foretold in general terms what it fully details. There is not a nation of antiquity, the traditions of which do not speak of some personage whose life resembles that of Jesus ; but are we to conclude from this that Christians have invented the life of the Saviour after the model of that of Osiris, Oromazes, Bacchus, Atys, or Adonis ? This would evince a poverty of conception that I could scarcely imagine. The whole universe was anxiously awaiting the promised Redeemer, whose advent was everywhere announced ; and all those nations, impatient for his coming, personified him before he really appeared. This is the whole mystery. The same explanation applies to the virgin. Isaiah is not the only one who made this strange announcement—"A virgin shall bring forth a Son." The whole East was in possession of oracles which made the same announcement. Amongst the Gauls, one hundred years before the birth of our Saviour, an altar was found with this inscription—"To the virgin who is to bring forth."

MYSELF.—And before the days of the Druids, the extacies who have bequathed to us the celestial chart, wrote this prophecy on the starry firmament. I now understand that this truth having been announced to man by means of extasis almost immediately after the fall, it is quite as natural to find it pictured upon the firmament as chronicled in the pages of Isaiah.

THE OFFICER.—My task, gentlemen, is now merely to listen to you. I should not even attempt to interrupt you, if it were not to suggest that you are perhaps mistaken about this virgin. She signifies here, both in the celestial sphere, and in the sacred monuments of all ages, the Church which is to bring forth the Truth. It is the Good and the True alone, in all their degrees, which the Lord reveals to his prophets. In the natural sense also, the event was verified by the birth of Jesus ; because all that was true in the superior degree was manifested to the Jewish Church in a sensible manner, since the latter was in the natural degree. You are now acquainted with our table of degrees, and therefore this will not puzzle you, I presume. In a word, then, the announcement of the virgin has reference, in the interior or spiritual meaning, to a church, while in the outward, or extremes, it relates to the mother of the Saviour ; but in both cases it signifies the same thing. The lowest degree, or the Effect, manifests in a natural manner the immaterial or preceding degrees, which are the End and the Cause.

MYSELF.—This explains to me a fact, which I never before rightly understood. I mean that the Jewish Church was representative throughout its entire history. It is evident that it was only the manifestation of a Cause imperceptible to men.

In order that the actions of God towards man should be seen by the latter, it was necessary that they should descend from the innermost or intimates, and should establish themselves in the extremes. You see that I begin to speak your own language. But will you allow me to mention an idea which just now occurs to me? You say that the Lamb represents the Redeemer in his human nature; that is to say, God descending to the lowest degrees of the creation, and appearing to exercise a mediation between heaven and earth. It is the Mediator, therefore, that we are to see in the lamb of the Apocalypse.

THE OFFICER.—You are quite right.

MYSELF.—Well, you are aware that sceptics have asserted that the Saviour is only an image of the Mithra of the Persians. The latter, according to the Abbé Foucher, was God acting as Mediator between Oromazes and men. The sun, which represented Mithra, was called on this account by the name of the Mediator. You see, then, that in the primitive revelation this orb must have exactly represented the mediation of the Saviour, and that, too, by means of the sign into which he enters at the spring equinox. Yes, the celestial lamb which then repairs the ravages of winter, is most certainly the emblem of the Mediator who came to wash away the sins of the world. The traditions of the Persians, and sceptical philosophy, equally proclaim this great truth.

THE OFFICER.—You are actually reading the Apocalypse, gentlemen, without my assistance. I am confident that you would now succeed without difficulty in explaining the dragon which puzzled you so much a short time ago, without standing in stupid amazement, like Bossuet, at its appearing before the woman to devour her.

MYSELF.—To be sure. Is not evil always hovering around good, from its birth, in order to pollute it? And then, is not the colour of this dragon—its dark and fiery red—also a pollution or degradation of that colour in its original shade? If the latter is the symbol of divine love, is not the former the exact emblem of the love opposed to it? I remember having read in Plutarch that the Egyptians, who adored the god of evil under the name of Typhon, also held that he was of a lurid red.

EUGENE.—We cannot make the least objection to this explanation. But, notwithstanding all the learning of the writer we have just spoken of, I do not imagine that we are yet capable of reading the Apocalypse without the explanation of our friend the Officer. We agree with him that this book is the production of an extatic, and that it cannot be read with ease unless we are acquainted with the character of the extatic language. We have learned enough to enable us to understand your explanation, but not to qualify us for explaining it our-

selves. It was at first rather uncertain what degree of confidence to place in the vision of St John, and what value to attach to our commentator's interpretations, but now I understand, that vision, being a communication with the spiritual world, must prove its nature by the very nature of a visionary's ideas. In theology the miracle proves the doctrine, and this doctrine, in its turn, proves the miracle. This argument cannot be refuted. Visions must be judged of in like manner. A moral theory founded on them, proves, from that circumstance alone, its spiritual origin; and, reversing this dogma to meet the present case, we assert that visions taken by themselves require a moral theory in order to test their soundness. The two short tables which sum up the doctrines set forth in the Apocalypse, prove that the visions it contains are communications with the purest sphere of the spiritual world.

THE OFFICER.—In fact, gentlemen, evil and good are not only in this lower world, but also in that from which ours receives all its influences. If the spirit of good acts on us, so also does the spirit of evil. In a word, if there are visions founded on truth, there are, in like manner, those which owe their origin to falsehood.

MYSELF.—Your theory of degrees explains that fully. Evil and falsehood are not solely in the natural degree, but also in the spiritual. In fact, do not even the illiterate and uneducated see the truth of this when they say that Goodness and Truth come from God, and that Evil and Error are prompted by the Devil? Now, the Devil, as we understand it, is merely a name for evil and falsehood taken collectively—it cannot be anything else.

EUGENE.—Allow me to conclude. I was just coming to my second subject of doubt; I mean, what value to attach to the explanations we have received. Now, if our friend will shew us, in our future discussions on this subject, that there is an exact agreement and analogy between the expressions made use of in the Apocalypse and those employed by other extatics, we cannot pronounce his explanation arbitrary. When reading the Apocalypse in his language, we shall feel certain that this language is genuine and true, because it evidently has not been invented expressly for the purpose.

MYSELF.—I think this is a very proper conclusion. For my part, I am determined to pay the most scrupulous attention to the emblems of the Apocalypse in detail. I have already been made acquainted with a new theory respecting them, and now wish to learn how to apply it for my profit and instruction. I now view the Apocalypse—which I formerly looked on as the most obscure book in the world—as the history of all that is most certain and undoubted—I mean, Goodness and

Truth, Evil and Error. An extatic cannot see anything but this, for there is nothing else which can properly be said to exist or have life. St Augustine saw this better than Bossuet when he summed the matter up thus :—"There are two kingdoms—mingled as regards the body, separated as regards the spirit. The one is the Babylon, the other is the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse." I say, in other terms, the one is evil, the other is good. In the eyes of God, as in those of the man who lives in the love and fear of God, there is nothing which can be said to have a rational existence but the Church, because it is by means of it that man is united to God, and the creature returns to its Author. We have thus presented to our consideration at once the oldest and the newest history which exists—the history of Good changed into Evil, and of Evil combated by Good, and finally overcome by it. I much prefer viewing the Apocalypse as the representation of this struggle, which comes home to each one of us so forcibly, rather than as a warring of the constellations one against the other.

THE OFFICER.—This book, gentlemen, is the picture of the destinies of Man; at first issuing perfect from the hands of his Maker, then becoming corrupted, and at last returning to his first condition. It is the picture of the promised Age of Gold coming to replace that age of good which had been lost; and, looking on it in this point of view, could there be a nobler theme? Inasmuch as it is the production of an extatic, this book can only refer to states of the spiritual life, and not to times, places, and material things; and this consideration should prove to you that no explanation of it but one furnished by extasis is possible.

After this short address, the Officer retired, leaving us puzzled and overwhelmed with what we had just heard.

CHAPTER IV.

Rev., chaps. i. ii. iii.

THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST, AND THE COUNSELS OF WISDOM.

THAT the reading of the Apocalypse should ever excite my mind so far as to deprive me of a night's rest, would at one time have seemed a thing utterly impossible; yet such was the result of our last conversation. All night I tossed on my bed, without closing an eye, so completely was I overwhelmed with all I had just heard. Occasionally I felt myself, to ascertain if I were indeed awake, for sometimes I was tempted to believe that the Officer had thrown me into a magnetic trance, during which I had traversed the regions described by St John, and was now unable to return from my theosophical and critical excursion.

What! I said to myself; am I, who believed only what was affirmed by the senses—I whose judgment was formed by the study of the natural sciences—I who always required to see clearly before yielding my credence to anything—who never rested contented with the probable—I who trusted no philosophy till I had passed its dogmas through the crucible of analysis—am I at last found struggling with the beasts of the Apocalypse? What a fall! And yet I have heard nothing contrary to reason. May not all be true? Do not visionaries really exist? And does not St John proclaim himself as one of them?

Do not his expressions prove that he has written a dream, a vision, and not described the heavens as an astronomer? One cannot deny this. It would be rejecting the clearest evidence. Yet what will be said of me when it is known that I am studying the Apocalypse, and have approved of a certain interpretation of it? Truly, I shall fall very low in public estimation. Well, then, I must dissimulate. But to dissimulate is to lie, to fall into falsehood. I suppose, therefore, I must bear all their jests upon the subject, though self-love will scarcely permit me to be so humble. Better, then, to lift up my head proudly at once, and say to these people, Yes, I

am studying the Apocalypsc. Do you know what it is? No. Then I shall tell you. It is a book containing pictures like those of the Old Testament, symbols of a remote antiquity, allusions to old legends, old cosmogonies, and to the antique sphere. Think you that an explanation which binds together all traditions of antiquity would be a valueless object of research? An explanation for which the philosophy of a Plato and a Proclus is requisite, can it be indeed contemptible? Even were the idea of religion not connected with the book, none but fools, surely, would disdain the study of a literary production upon which the emblematic genius of the early ages is imprinted so strongly.

Morning dawned as I finished this monologue. So I arose to go and awaken Eugene, and force him to admit me that moment into his library.

His night had been more tranquil than mine, though already the calm which morning almost invariably brings to the mind, enabling us to see things clearly as they are, had moderated my ardour a little.

Wait, said Eugene, till you have gone through the book, before pronouncing your opinion so decidedly. We have scarcely begun, and yet you think yourself already an adept. Had you lived in the days of religious proselytism, your enthusiasm would infallibly have made you chief of a sect.

MYSELF.—You are mistaken. I have listened to the Socialists, but they failed to convince me.

EUGENE.—I do not deny the probability of the system propounded by the Officer. I believed the Apocalypse to contain a picture of the possible future of the world; but even were this belief to prove unfounded, I thought I had another resource equally plausible, viz., that, in fact, no key could open a door without a lock; no reason could judge of the irrational; that the whole Revelation was a mere invention of St John, and, therefore, no absolute meaning was to be found within it.

However, I now see that it contains a repetition of all the images employed by Ezekiel and the other prophets of the Old Testament. I see a remarkable conformity in it with the legends current prior to Christianity. I find in it the astrology and the mysticism of the East; in short, I see that the book is not an invention according to the caprice of an individual. Then it is a plagiarism, people will say. To which I answer, plagiarists do not pillage after this fashion. From the very rudeness of the style, the apparent disorder of the ideas, the confusion of the scenes, and finally, the extravagance of the images, I should say the book was written by a sincere man. St John lived during the brightest period of Roman genius; he used a language polished to the utmost excess by the fastidious Greeks. Had he been a mere author, and not a visionary,

he would have written in a better style. This every one must allow.

I was much struck by this calm, clear avowal made by Eugene ; then, sending him to look after his own affairs, I requested a cup of coffee, and remained in the library. The perusal of books foreign to our subject, soon restored me to my usual frame of mind ; and when the hour of meeting arrived, and Eugene appeared with the Officer, I found myself disposed not only to listen more coldly, but even to cavil if occasion offered.

THE OFFICER.—To-day, gentlemen, we shall commence our Elysian travels with St John. You will probably not object to ascending with him to the upper regions, when you have already descended to the lower with Ulysses, Æneas, and Tele-machus. Everywhere you will discover, under the images employed to represent them, the Good and the True—the Bad and the False. Therefore, it will not be difficult for you to tread the labyrinth on which you are about to enter, with the aid of the two slips of paper upon which I have noted this duality, and the theory of degrees.

It will serve you as the thread of Ariadne, and we shall be forced to hold by it often. At present, however, we have only to consider the three first chapters of the Apocalypse, which you will probably comprehend without explanation, as they merely contain advice to the Church. They are the counsels of wisdom, and nothing but reason is required to understand them.

EUGENE.—Pardon me if I take a different view. It seems to me that a whole system of religion may be discovered in these counsels, and I shall not be sorry to have them discussed. Besides, the first chapter contains the appearing of Jesus Christ ; and many, as well as myself, cannot comprehend its full meaning.

THE OFFICER.—Let us begin, then, from the beginning. In the first three verses, you see St John professes to receive his revelation from Jesus Christ, who had himself received it from God. Christ is God manifested in the extremes of creation, and, by an effort of thought, we are to separate him here from God who dwells in the universal essence. He is, in fact, the Word made Flesh—Wisdom transmitting to us the words of Love.

MYSELF.—That is a very plausible way of making us look on Christ as the one only God, and of identifying him with his Father. For, in truth, divine Love can only be revealed through Wisdom ; and, in saying that this wisdom was made flesh, we merely affirm that it was manifested in the lowest degrees of creation ; for such the flesh is. In the two superior degrees, Spirit corresponds to it.

EUGENE.—What a profound idea this gives us of Jesus Christ! He is the divine wisdom, and as the wisdom of God cannot be separated from his love, it follows that Jesus is God himself, and the only God. He cannot be separated from Love or his Father, except in idea. It is a logical division made by the understanding merely, but which has no existence in reality.

THE OFFICER.—What is real consists in this, that, by descending within the limits of time and humanity; or, in other words, by assuming flesh, the divine wisdom, thus descending within the circle of nature, presents to our eyes a being distinct from the God who dwells in the innermost—a *Mediator* who leads us back to the divine essence inaccessible to man since the fall. Therefore, through Jesus Christ thus manifested we can alone reach the Father. All Christians agree so far as this. The second truth we arrive at in these first verses of the chapter is, that the author names himself as one of the four evangelists. The book, consequently, is not apocryphal, but authentic. It is by St John.

MYSELF.—That seems to me of no moment. The book relates to the other world; in that lies its importance. Whether it be by St John or any one else, if it be conformable to the prophetic style, it is the work of a visionary.

If people object that it is by some one who adopted the language of an extatic, in order to impose on the world, I answer, that common sense refutes such a notion. An impostor would have shewn more cunning in his plan and details. Even a Lucien himself could not have carved out such a plan without betraying himself. Let others pronounce decidedly upon the books which are *canonical*, and those which are not; as for me, I admit no books as intermediaries between God and us, except those given to us by *extatics*. God has spoken by their mouth; therefore in their writings alone must we look for the inspiration of Scripture.

But now, having settled these questions, tell me why St John says the time is near in which these things must come to pass. Bossuet perhaps was not far wrong when he looked for their accomplishment so early as the reign of Diocletian.

THE OFFICER.—You remember that for the soul there is no such thing as *time*; there are *states*. Christ, therefore, could only have intended to reveal the succession of these states, and not to specify the particular reign when they were to be manifested. He whose kingdom is not of this world, has nothing to say to the chronologies of the kingdoms of the earth. In speaking of a state, that event is near, whatever it may be, which immediately concerns it, which has an immediate or direct influence upon it. After that, St John begins by addressing the seven churches of Asia. Seven is a mystic

number, signifying totality. It is, therefore, the universal Church which is figured by Asia, the land of all revelations.

EUGENE.—There is something very striking in the union of these two mystic expressions. The seven that enters into all symbols, and this ancient Asia, whence originated all initiations, combine well together at the opening of a book of mysteries. Let us pause for an instant to consider the numbers, for they play an important part in the subsequent chapters, and perhaps even a third memorandum would be necessary in order to assist us.

I have often thought over the subject, and firmly believe there is something profound in the science of numbers. I have read all that Pythagoras has said, and tried to comprehend all that St Martin has written concerning them ; but this, at least, is my own theory. *One* is the universal unity, the ultimate principle of all that is, and represents God, who, like the Monad, cannot be divided. *Two*, according to Pythagoras, denotes change, evil ; this is why the Romans consecrated it to Pluto. *Three* is perfection, perhaps because it unites the three degrees you mentioned to us, which explain the nature of the Trinity so well. *Four* is union, because it is two multiplied by itself. The Pythagoreans applied it to oaths. *Five*, which contains one unit more, and therefore deranges this union, signifies little ; it realises the Italian proverb, *Better is the enemy of well*. *Six* means labour. *Seven*, totality. *Eight*, being the double of four, signifies likewise union. *Nine*, or three times three, conjunction. *Ten*, like the unit, denotes oneness—the entire. *Eleven*, like five, deranges this order, and, like it, signifies little ; while *Twelve*, being the product of four multiplied by three, is the sacred number beyond all others.

THE OFFICER.—Well, that is your system, now I shall give you mine, first remarking that the signification of each number is twofold, like the moral world itself. They all, in fact, denote the good and true ; but, according to the place they occupy, they may often signify the bad and false. Observe, also, that the squares of a number have always the same signification as the simple roots. Thus, twelve and a hundred and forty-four have absolutely the same symbolic meaning. Grant me these conditions, and then you will find nothing arbitrary in the table I have drawn up.

One.—The Monad—the Deity.

Two.—Duality—Love and Truth.

Three.—Totality as regards truth, for it is the manifestation of the two divine faculties.

Four.—Totality as regards Good—Union.

Five.—Commencement of another period—Little.

- Six.*—Three multiplied by two—totality as regards the True.
- Seven.*—Three added to four—the Good and the True in their completeness.
- Eight.*—Twice four—the Entire. But, as coming after seven, it signifies the beginning of a new state.
- Nine.*—Conjunction of Seven and Two—of the complete state and the new state.
- Ten.*—The Whole, inasmuch as it is a Unity of another order.
- Eleven.*—Totality *plus* One—Means the same as five.
- Twelve.*—Four multiplied by Three, expresses the sum of Sacred things.

MYSELF.—Still, there is something arbitrary in all that—any one might draw up a similar table according to his fancy. However, I admit that it would be a vain attempt to endeavour to find out the causes which gave each of those primitive terms the signification they seem to have borne.

In order to give credence to your table, we only require to see whether these numbers bore the same signification in all the sacred books of antiquity, and that they did so is certainly matter of fact. No one can doubt the extreme importance of the three principal numbers, 3, 7, and 12. They form a part of every symbol, and I am not at all astonished at finding them employed by St John, as well as by every other sacred writer. I should like, I confess, to discover a reason in nature for the meanings affixed to them; but this I find impossible. Therefore, I accept your table as true, relatively, though I cannot possibly consider it as true absolutely.

Physicians say that seven expresses the changes of human life. There may be no foundation for this, still the number seven has originated the idea of climacteric periods. If not a natural truth, it has become a current opinion, and therefore I may quote it as containing a certain degree of historic truth.

So it is with your numbers. Your metaphysical arithmetic may be false, still it has been currently received as true, and this is all we require. I highly approve your idea of applying the same symbol to the opposite terms of moral life which we have recognised. And in this way I can harmonise your system with Eugene's. He consecrates the number two to Pluto, you to love and truth. Both are right, for one speaks of two as applied to the good side of nature, the other to the bad.

Now I am ready to follow your farther explanations. The seven spirits before the throne of God signify, no doubt, according to your system, all heaven, as the Seven Churches of Asia represent the universal Church on earth.

THE OFFICER.—With hearers like you, the book will soon

be read. The throne of God and Jesus Christ, the first-born of the dead, need no explanation, no more than the Prince of the kings of the earth, who makes us kings and priests.

EUGENE.—Wait a little. The Throne is Heaven. The first-born of the dead is the first man born again by spiritual regeneration ; but these kings and priests, who do they signify ?

THE OFFICER.—The Kings denote those who are filled with knowledge—the Priests those who are filled with love. It is by the understanding that man lays hold on truth, his intellect is a king that guides all his other faculties ; but the function of a priest is to guide to the good in life, to celestial love. As to the clouds on which Jesus is to appear, you are to understand by them the clouds of our understanding ; in the mystic sense, these signify the Scripture according to the letter. The Scripture is God himself, and, you must acknowledge, is, in this way, often veiled in clouds.

MYSELF.—Yet there is something rather revolting in this personification of the Holy Scripture. Throughout the Apocalypse it is spoken of as a kind of divinity ; and is there not a species of image worship in that ? Can you ease my mind a little on this point before we pass to the vision of St John ?

THE OFFICER.—In his gospel, does not St John say that the Divine Wisdom, the *Word*, in fact, was made flesh ? Well, there is the Holy Scripture deified. The Bible is the Word of God. I do not see any difficulty to explain.

EUGENE.—No doubt it is the word fixed by means of writing, and afterwards of printing. But it is neither the paper, nor the letters, nor the manuscript, nor the book, that can represent God ; it must be the words which he has put into the mouths of the prophets.

THE OFFICER.—Do not say they only *represent* God ; they are God. For, in fact, what is your speech, is it not yourself in full completeness ? Your word, is it not your love and intellect arriving at a special manifestation ? Your utterance at this moment, is it not yourself ? Well, it is the same with the Word of God, though millions of years may have passed away. With Him all is present ; his name is, That Which Is—the word uttered to the prophet was God himself manifested ; and He is still manifested in that word to whoever receives it. There is no idolatry or image-worship in this doctrine.

MYSELF.—There is profound philosophy in what you have said. True, the word is a form by which ideas become visible. The form of God's thought may then be received as God himself, and so we may say he exists for us in the Word. I shall no longer object to the use of the term in the spiritual world, for it plays an important part in this world.

Let us now consider St John's vision.

He was in the Spirit, he tells us, on the Lord's day, and heard a great voice, as of a trumpet, which bade him write what he saw; and he beheld seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like to the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe bound with a golden girdle, and his head and hair resembling wool or snow. The feet of this apparition were like brass in a furnace; his voice like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, a sword went out of his mouth, and his countenance was like the sun. Explain all that in common language, and afterwards we may proceed to the Seven Churches designated in the following chapters. Dupuis considers this apparition as the sun personified; but, for us, it is clearly Jesus Christ. There is no difficulty there, except to account for the attributes given to him.

THE OFFICER.—That will be very easy. The extatic sees Christ here as every extatic would see the attributes of Truth, of the Word. Then, the vision took place on a Sunday, the day of the sun, the day of the Lord; you are not now shocked to see these two words in conjunction. It merely expresses: What I have seen, it was the Patron of this day made me see. I could even go farther, and shew you how the Isle of Patmos, where the prophet was placed, is situated between Asia, which represents light, and Europe, the land towards which it travels; which is in fact saying to the western Christians: It is for you I write; the light comes to you from where all revelations have had their origin. This great voice is divine truth striking the heart, as a trumpet strikes the ear. The seven golden candlesticks are next to be explained.

A candlestick is destined to bear artificial light—the emblem of moral truth transmitted to men; seven is complete truth, and gold is symbolic of purity and love. The Old Testament speaks also of a golden candlestick in the tabernacle, to represent the truth of the Church. See Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and the prophet Zechariah, who speak in the same way of a golden candlestick as symbolising the new Church about to be established by Christ.

EUGENE.—These details are sufficient on the subject of the candlestick, for it is an emblem that speaks for itself. Whatever gives light to the eyes, is a fitting emblem for that which enlightens the soul. But this same One like to the Son of Man, is it not Jesus Christ himself? St John does not say so exactly. "One like to him," is his expression, and these words convey precisely what would be the impression of an extatic who sees things in a kind of dream. Why, however, is he called here Son of Man, and not Son of God?

THE OFFICER.—Because the expression has reference to God as the Word, which, as we have already proved, is his human manifestation. His Robe is the emblem of the Truth that

envelopes him ; for garments, amongst the ancients, in general figured doctrines that cover the nudity of the soul. All philosophers have recognised this symbol, and felt that the clothing of a man should announce something of his inward spirit. From thence arose peculiar vestments for different classes, by means of which ignorance and hypocrisy often gained honours little due to them.

Observe the minute details given in the Scripture respecting the high priest's garments : because all these details had their importance ; every vestment had its significance, and the large outer robe signified truth in its full completeness. When Christ was transfigured, his raiment became shining ; and Isaiah, addressing Jerusalem, says : Put on thy garments of beauty ; while Ezekiel calls them raiment of gold and silver. That these are truths given by the Lord himself, is too evident to be contested.

Now let us pass to the girdle of gold. You know what gold signifies, and the girdle is the emblem of all good and all truth united, bound together upon the breast of man. In the breast is placed the heart, the emblem of love ; and the lungs, or organs of respiration, the symbol of the intellect. Did not the fable of antiquity represent Venus cinctured with a girdle, that conferred all the gifts and graces of beauty united together ?

MYSELF.—True ; but we need not go back so far. Has not the girdle the same signification even with us ? Besides being a decoration of beauty, is it not an attribute of command, signifying the union of all qualities in man ?

This emblematical meaning of the girdle is so plain, that Isaiah says : In place of a girdle there shall be division. You have justly explained the symbol, and it is well fitted to the Son of Man. I therefore accept your explanation in preference to that of Dupuis, who considered it to represent the circle of the zodiac. These erudite philosophers are sometimes rather absurd.

THE OFFICER.—The prophets even employed it to represent the state of the Church ; and when the word seemed dead amongst men, they wore a leathern girdle, like John the Baptist—for leather is the garment of animals, and therefore a symbol of degradation.

Ezekiel was told to hide his girdle under a rock, and when he drew it forth again after many days, it was corrupted. Is not this the truth which the Jews had hidden, and allowed to become polluted within their stony hearts ? Observe, too, the head of the Son of Man is specified here as well as the feet, to figure the divine goodness, celestial as well as natural.

MYSELF.—Right ; but the hair is described as being like snow or wool ; and this absence of positive affirmation accords

well with the nature of a dream, as Eugene remarked a little while since. What is the meaning, then, of this snow or wool?

THE OFFICER.—The lamb being the emblem of divine humanity, this image blends itself with that of man in the mind of the extatie; so that the hair of the Son of Man seems like wool, an emblem of the gentle grace of Charity, or like snow, which dazzles without burning, and therefore is a striking image of Truth. Everywhere it is still the Good and the True which are symbolised. The hair, too, signifies the ultimate extreme of anything; it is life in its extreme limits, for the muscles and nerves have ended. As regards truth, therefore, it expresses its final completion and fullest strength. You remember the strength of Samson lay in his hair.

Our Lord's eyes are represented as a flame, that is the burning emanation of love; ordinary language even has consecrated this metaphor. His feet of brass, signify the diviue humanity. For we find the feet employed as the hieroglyphic to express the natural in man as opposed to the spiritual. Brass, amongst metals, is the hieroglyphic for the same. To kiss the feet means humiliation to the lowest degree; and to wash the feet, amongst Christiaus, meant the purification of the natural man.

Where Christ says: If your foot offend you, cut it off, is it not clear that he means, if the natural man hinders you from believing, crush it, though it would be better to rest your faith upon the natural, and rise from it as from a base? And now as to the brass; what is the meaning of that brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, to heal the bite of the other serpents, but the Divine nature healing the human nature, spotted with selfishness like a serpent? Daniel, likewise, in one of his visions, saw a man whose feet were of brass. It is a vision similar to that of St John.

EUGENE.—Let us pause a little, and reflect over your interpretations. Everywhere in the Bible you seem to find a moral meaning. In heathen fable, also, I see the Furies wreathed with serpents, to indicate their malignity. I see offerings of hair employed in sacrifices, to indicate the annihilation of natural inclinations. Your notion is not arbitrary. Hair is the adornment of the head, as truth of the intellect. Observe how the fine intellect of Apollo is figured by his flowing hair; while the Satyrs, with their limited intellect, are represented with close-cropped heads.

I believe the perruques of Louis XIV.'s age were invented as emblems, to signify that the heads they covered were filled with the most beautiful ideas in the world. How rapidly one travels on with you! Your idea cannot be an invention.

THE OFFICER.—We have next to consider the voice of the

Lord, which resembled the sound of many waters. Water is the mirror of light, and emblematical of *truth*, which is transparent like it. The waters here represent truths grander than those professed by men. Isaiah describes Jehovah as pouring out his Spirit on the earth, and using these words: I will give water to those which are athirst. In fact, thirst is always used to express the desire for truth, as hunger the aspiration after love. Jeremiah says: My people have abandoned me, I who am the source of living waters. Is not truth also always spoken of as flowing from a fountain?

In that day, says Zechariah, living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem. Does not that designate Divine truths? But we need not collect passages to support our interpretation, the whole Scripture is full of them.

In his right hand, continues St John, the Lord held seven stars. Observe here the very vagueness of the relation betrays the nature of the apparition. How could a hand hold seven stars without hiding them? The mystical meaning of seven is known to us already as the complete union of the Good and True; the stars signify knowledge, for that is acquired by truth, and the emblem is sustained throughout, as Christ appears here under the form of THE WORD.

When the prophets wish to represent Divine knowledge as extinct, they say the stars have lost their light, or have fallen from heaven. The spirits, says Daniel, shall shine as the stars: the seven stars of the Apocalypse, then, decidedly mean the completeness of all knowledge. Out of the mouth of Christ went a sword. Every one knows that this metaphor is consecrated to speech—the sword of the Word. Now, from the Divine Word can proceed nothing but truth; it is that, consequently, which is figured here. And finally, we come to the conclusion of this emblematical description—the face of the Lord shone like the sun. This has been explained elsewhere; so my task is finished. But, the more you study the subject, the more rigorously exact will you find my interpretation. You wished the language of St John translated into our common idiom; there it is, then: THE WORD, with all the attributes of truth, appeared in the midst of the Divine light to the soul of St John.

No difficulty, you see, need alarm you for so far, and I hope we shall make every chapter of the Apocalypse as clear as the first; for as to the concluding verses, they are comprehensible without any comment.

MYSELF.—In truth, I am no longer startled at the idea of commencing the study of the Apocalypse. On the contrary, your explanation has delighted me. How much contained in a few lines! and what complete confirmation of your theories may be drawn from the prophets and from pagan monuments!

If it is objected, that the vision of the Son of Man is improbable, I appeal to the tenth chapter of Daniel for support. If people cavil at the sword, I remind them that the Mithra of the Persians was armed after the same fashion. Dupuis maintains that it means the combat of the sun ; but I am of your opinion, that it figures the war of truth against falsehood. For, is not the true really obliged to combat in order to dissipate the false ? If the seven candlesticks seem strange, I may cite the seven chords of Apollo's lyre, emblematic of the sun, and the flute with seven pipes of the god Pan, type of the universal Whole.

The coverings of Christ's feet need not surprise either one who is accustomed to the perusal of the ancients, for we may remember that Martianus Capella says that the Sun-god, which represented the mystic sun, had his feet shod with fine brass. See how your primitive revelation explains all these similarities. What you state of the girdle is also true. It expresses completeness in what relates to man, and what he most values is placed there.

EUGENE.—Bossuet says that the girdle here symbolises *the company of the saints* ; so he confirms your meaning somewhat.

MYSELF.—Yet I prefer the company of all truths and all good, if the word company is to be used to express the aggregate of both. However, here is another analogy. We find, in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, first book, a judgment of Orpheus, in which the poet describes the ornaments and costume of the statue of the sun during the festival held in his honour. From the right shoulder hung a spotted fawn-skin, beneath which glittered a golden girdle—emblem of the sun ; but the poet is not happy in the explanation he tries to give for the choice of this symbol. When the sun, he says, reaches the extremity of the earth, his golden rays blend with the waves of ocean, and, from the mingled splendour and vapour, he appears rolling before him a whirlwind of light, till the whole vast circumference of the sea seems like a girdle placed beneath his breast. Despite of my respect for the grand Orpheus, I cannot but prefer our explanation to his.

Give us now the true meaning of the seven churches.

THE OFFICER.—With them we shall proceed quickly, for there are no longer emblematical details to elucidate. The seven churches, we have already said, mean the universal Christian Church. That of Ephesus represents those who excel in the knowledge of truth more than in the practice of good. Truth is the fruit of intellect, but it must be joined with love, to convert it into sentiment. Without that, it remains but a recreation of the intellect. Thus, it is said of these people that they have relaxed in their charity ; and they are

recommended to practise good works, lest their candlestick be taken away. In fact, truth itself will abandon man if he does not realise it by works. Christ, then, by his organ St John, promises to those who are finally victorious the fruit of the tree of life. Intellect alone is not life ; it is Love which is the true life of man : and he that overcometh his evil passions, he who is regenerated in mind and heart, can alone taste of that immortal fruit.

EUGENE.—Would any one think we were discussing the Apocalypse ? How plain all that seems ! Now, proceed to the church of Smyrna.

THE OFFICER.—It figures those whose acts are good, but whose doctrine is false. Christ pities their affliction and poverty ; that is to say, their want of spiritual truth. Nevertheless, he says, you are rich, rich in good works. Is not this all simple ? Good, though worked out blindly, finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. He consoles them, he tells them they will be put in prison—that their narrow intellect will be enslaved ; but that whoever resists falsehood, and continues to practise good, will not be touched by the second death. The first death is that of the body ; the second that of the soul ; which last is eternal condemnation.

MYSELF.—A perfectly clear sermon ; there are no mysteries here. Alas ! how many poor Smyrniotes exist amongst us, whose intellect God will, no doubt, enlighten some day, but to whom even now he promises a rich reward for the good they practise !

THE OFFICER.—Those of Pergamos are the mere doers of good works, but who hold not the knowledge of the truth ; therefore they are described as dwelling with Satan, the Chief of Falsehood, the Father of Lies. Though they have not denied the name of God, yet they are fallen lower than the Smyrniotes. These last do good according to their ability and their light, with an upright conscience ; whereas the Pergamites practise good works for the mere hope of reward in heaven. It is selfishness carried into religion.

MYSELF.—My servant told me to-day of a very pious lady who was always praying that God would make her happy after death. This seemed to her the object of all religion. I tried to explain that prayer, for the mere purpose of saving ourselves, and gaining heaven, was pure egotism, a strong form of utter selfishness. Had I known then what Pergamos signified in the Apocalypse, I would simply have called the good lady a Pergamite.

EUGENE.—Ah, could we all comprehend the meaning of prayer like Fenelon ! How sublime it is to ask nothing for ourselves, but all for *His* glory, and the good of our brethren ! Prayer like this is the highest devotion.

THE OFFICER.—Let us see, now, what the Lord promises to this church, if it became regenerate. "They shall have," says he, "the hidden manna." This manna is the Divine Spirit, that sanctifies good works, or joins Wisdom with Good ; and this is the true remedy for their disease. The manna eaten in the desert was the type of the bread of life given by Christ to his disciples. I will give them also, adds the Lord, a white stone, with a new name on it, which none can read but the receiver. This white stone signifies Wisdom uniting with and confirming the Good. A stone in Scripture is everywhere the symbol of faith. Thou art Peter, and on this rock I build my Church, are the words of Christ to Simon. You have already seen what these words mean. The colour white is the attribute of truth. Amongst the ancients, white stones given in the suffrages signified affirmative judgments. The new name inscribed on it is the new quality bestowed. The name of a thing, in all primitive languages, was a definition of the thing itself, and, in fact, we can scarcely conceive names being given without some reference to the nature of what they express. Lastly, this name, which none can read but the receiver, does it not clearly mean that he alone comprehends a doctrine who makes it the principle of his daily life ? Who understands Love but they who feel it ? Ah, the Apocalypse can be made plain to all of us, and the promises of the Holy Spirit are indeed founded upon a deep knowledge of the human heart ! Now let us pass to the fourth church, that of Thyatira.

MYSELF.—Not yet ; for St Epiphanius has remarked that in the days of St John there was no church at Thyatira.

EUGENE.—But Bossuet has answered him, by asserting that the church did exist, though much corrupted by the Montanists, and numbering so few members as scarcely to excite recognition.

THE OFFICER.—The dispute is of no consequence. Enough for us that a church existed there at a subsequent period. The Thyatirians are of two classes ; the first have faith without love, the second faith united with love. It is, therefore, a church half inner, half external. The Lord compares the first to adulterers, and speaks of the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess ; that is to say, one who makes faith alone the basis of all doctrine. In the Scripture idiom, you are aware, prostitution and adultery figure the spiritual action by which man separates that which ought to be united. Charity and faith ought to be but one, like the good and true—like love and wisdom in God, and the will and understanding in man. He who parts them, dissolves the spiritual marriage ; but to those who have preserved the union inviolate, he promises power over the nations ; that is, empire over all, good as well as bad ; and adds, that they shall rule them

with a rod of iron, and break them like vessels of clay. Here the sense is clear enough. The possession of divine truth will give the Christians of Thyatira a power which those guided by mere human reason cannot have, and they will, accordingly, subdue them as if they were but potter's vessels. Since by the nations is meant the good and bad taken in the abstract, it is clear that *governing* means submitting them to the empire of reason—the rod signifying command, and iron truth. Lastly, the Lord promises to these faithful the morning star; that is, the earliest knowledge of divine truth as it rises victorious above the falsehoods of men.

EUGENE.—Bede confirms your version by saying that this morning star signifies eternal day, which will never know decline or night. This learned man saw in it a promise of the future life coming after the last judgment, whereas you see in it the revelation of the Lord, in time, the dawning of the eternal day on earth. Here we end the second chapter of the Apocalypse, and I am surprised we have not met more mysteries. Pass on now to the third, if you please.

THE OFFICER.—The church designated at the commencement of this chapter, that of Sardis, figures those who have neither faith nor charity in their religion; therefore St John says to them energetically: You are called living, but you are dead. These words need no commentary; nor what follows: Strengthen what remains, the things that are ready to die. And these, what are they? The exterior acts, which will soon perish when the inner faith is wanting. Your works, he says, are not perfect before God; remember how you have received and heard. Can language be clearer? Works cannot be perfect, cannot form part of real religion, unless inspired by faith and love.

MYSELF.—I have seen churches that bear a strong resemblance to that of Sardis, wherein all is form, and consequently dead—where it is believed that salvation can be purchased by ceremonies—where they are charitable from self-interest, and give, in hope that God will give to them in return. People of this class fancy they are living, but, as the Apostle truly says, they are dead. St John has drawn their portraits as if he beheld them. Yet what wonder? for to the prophet-glance present and future are alike.

THE OFFICER.—Or rather, the heart of man is alike in all ages. The church of Philadelphia represents those who act from that truth which proceeds from love. When men are warmed by a feeling of ardent love, they can understand, and can make themselves understood better; when the heart is touched, truth comes without effort. Love can create intelligence, and truth may be perceived through feeling. Such is the Philadelphian state, and everything said to this church

confirms this explanation. The Lord opens a door for them that none can shut. Is not that an entrance into heaven? You have a little strength, he adds; is not that clearly an expression of the love which attributes all to God, and nothing to man? The more one loves, the more they are taken out of self—the less confidence they have in themselves. Presumption and selfishness are always found united.

EUGENE.—All that Christ promises, in fact, concerns those only who possess real religion. He tells them that others will bow down at their feet—that is, as I take it, they will recognise the truths held by the Philadelphians. He bids them preserve their crown, meaning their wisdom, which is their title to pre-eminence. He announces to them the coming of the New Jerusalem, because that church, like all those founded by Providence, will resemble the Philadelphian.

THE OFFICER.—The church of Laodicea, where are the lukewarm, who are neither cold nor hot, represent those who believe by turns in the Divine Word and in themselves; who are neither entirely spiritual nor entirely worldly; who, when plunged in the lowest degree of religion, the external, yet believe by a kind of habit; believe because others believe, do as others do, and think, consequently, they hold the faith; but, as soon as they rise from the sensual to the merely rational, without changing the object of their love, they no longer believe in anything.

MYSELF.—It is not possible to describe this class with greater precision than St John has done. I myself have often visited this church of Laodicea, and seen people there who imagined they believed, and yet were the first to laugh and jest afterwards over the very truths they had heard. This religion is mere custom, which the first breath of cold human reasoning is sufficient to dissipate—a spurious glow, worked up by a superstitious reverence for forms, which often deceives its votaries; but when the bandage falls from their eyes, farewell to all their fervour. They believe in revelation while marching in procession with others; but believe no longer when left to solitude and their own thoughts. I can well believe the Lord would spue such out of his mouth like tepid water. I would not have such automatons in my society.

EUGENE.—Oh, my friend! how true it is what Christ adds! You think you are rich, and loaded with goods. These men of processions, as you qualify them, do they not fancy themselves possessing the full plenitude of religion? They say they have need of nothing; do you not think you hear them utter the very words? Descending into the limits of their own narrow souls, and seeing nothing beyond that restricted horizon, they fancy they know all, and comprehend all! But Christ says to them: You know not how wretched, and poor,

and blind, and naked you are. Which of us has not been tempted to meet these Laodiceans with the same words? Wanting both true love and true intelligence, what riches of real value can they possess? Are we not all tempted to say, with Christ: Buy gold tried in the fire, it is the love that conquers temptation; and white raiment, it is the wisdom of Divine truth; and ointment for your eyes, that light may shine upon your understanding? Truly, no book of morality in the world ever characterised this class so clearly.

THE OFFICER.—We have now come to the conclusion of the third chapter of the Apocalypsc, and you see that nothing but clear and definite ideas have been offered to our minds.

MYSELF.—But the admonitions given by St John to the churches do not form the most difficult portion of the Apocalypsc. Your help will be more required for the fourth chapter. It is a hard morsel to swallow! and we must first ascend into the spiritual world with St John. While going through the churches, we were at least on earth. Proceed, dear Eugene, and keep firm in your saddle! Your steed is about to carry you above the clouds of this lower world. Beware of dizziness. Beware of falling!

THE OFFICER.—In conclusion, I shall just remark that St John, before coming to the recital of the degradations religion has to suffer, and the establishment of a New Church, gives counsel full of wisdom to Christians of every shade of belief: he enumerates every possible phase of religion, and indicates to all the duties they should fulfil, and the object they should aim at. Do you not agree with me?

EUGENE.—Nothing can be truer. Bossuet himself perceived that under the names of these churches, and under the number seven, the inspired author has represented the whole universal Church; but you go beyond him, in characterising specially each shade of belief held therein; and I confess that the characters you have depicted are precisely such as our daily experience, and our knowledge of the human heart, would lead us to expect in the so-called religious world. I await our next meeting with impatience, for the subject of the four animals has often occupied my thoughts.

Thereupon we all parted for the present, being perfectly unanimous in our opinions, so far as we had gone—a harmony of ideas rarely met with in society, where, in general, there are as many opinions as heads.

CHAPTER V.

Rev., chaps. iv. v.

THE APPARATUS OF THE JUDGMENT.

FRIENDS, said the Officer to us, commencing the conversation abruptly, after a slight inclination of the head, we are about to enter into the spiritual world, whilst directing our attention to the four following chapters. The judgment of the Reformed Church, or the advocates of Faith alone, commences with the eighth; and we shall then come to the account of the ruin of modern Babylon, or of the doctrine which substitutes man for God. The announcement of the Church—the Church Universal—which is re-established in the present day upon the earth, will close our examination, as it closes the book.

MYSELF.—Deal gently, if you please, with your Apocalyptic emblems. Taken separately, they seem very ingenious, I admit; but the general view—especially when stated so prematurely—bewilders me no little. What probability is there that St John wrote beforehand the history of Protestantism and Ultramontaniam? I recollect very distinctly what you told me before on this subject; but I am not yet sufficiently accustomed to such a fantastic idea not to experience a revulsion of feeling as often as it presents itself to my mind. Addison says that, by dint of thinking on any subject, we come at last to believe it; and habit, perhaps, may produce conviction in my case also.

THE OFFICER.—I wish to carry the fortress by assault. We must mount upon the walls when the breach is practicable. I want none of that barren yet complacent faith which habit—that deadener of every glowing impulse—produces even in the most unbelieving. I wish for an assent resulting from the free use of your understanding. This being premised, I enter on my subject. You are aware that St John is in a vision; consequently he is no longer on the earth. The sentiments expressed by him must be clothed with images, for we acknowledge that individuals in a state of extasis *see*, and that abstractions cannot be seen without assuming a body. In the spiri-

tual world, into which he is about to transport us, there is neither fixed time nor space ; that is admitted. Lastly, the mind of the Apostle is occupied solely with religion, with Him who established it, and with those who have received it in different degrees and in various ways. The images about to be presented to our eyes must necessarily, therefore, be representations of the religious world in all its phases. There will exist a perfect correspondence, a symbolical relation, between the objects he sees and the moral sentiments he feels. The latter are to us naked truths ; in the eyes of the Apostle they necessarily assume a definite form. To us they are words ; to him they are beings. To us, in short, they are words dying away in empty air ; to him they are living scenes realised, or, in a word, typified. This being agreed, the following is the sense of the fourth and fifth chapters. St John sees in heaven that which his mind takes cognisance of ; namely, divine Love, the Being and Essence of all that exists, surrounded by everything Good and True ; but clouds are interposed between it and fallen man. The Divine Word, the sole spiritual succour offered to man to enable him to attain to God, therefore appears. No one can render it accessible to the human intellect but the eternal Word itself manifest in the flesh. It is the Word itself which, under the form of a lamb, comes to arrange all things for the judgment.

MYSELF.—The Divine Being, separated by an effort of the thought from the Divine Wisdom, is represented, therefore, by this individual whom the seer perceives in his vision. The sum of all that is good and true is figured by the number twenty-four, composed of twice twelve, a complete number which is applied to the two halves of the moral creation. The four animals, according to your principles, are all incomplete representations of the truth appearing in the lowest degree ; these are the clouds of which you speak. The Holy Scripture is plainly the book held by Him who sits upon the throne. The Lamb, who alone can explain it, is the Lord in his human state, who by means of this book comes to judge the generations of his people. On the whole, that is tolerably easily comprehended, thanks to the explanations which you have given us ; but we must see if the details correspond.

THE OFFICER.—St John was commanded to ascend higher ; let us endeavour to ascend into these regions—regions which you will no longer, I am very sure, deem imaginary. He tells you, at the commencement, that he is in the Spirit ; look, therefore, in this narrative only for spiritual things, and not for allusions to history or astronomical emblems. It is not a cunning framer of symbols who speaks, but a visionary. A throne is presented to his eyes, and the throne signifies heaven prepared for the judgment. A monarch issues his

decrees seated on his throne. The visionary, struck by a judgment about to be executed, could only see it in the representative form of a throne. St Matthew says that, on the day of judgment, the Son of Man shall be seated on the throne of his glory. The Psalmist often represents Jehovah as seated on the throne of justice. Daniel sees the Ancient of Days seated upon his throne.

EUGENE.—That cannot be disputed. A throne necessarily infers the idea of a judgment, or of a decree given forth. To an extatic the process is reversed; judgment and decision, which are abstract things, require the image of the throne to make them apparent to the senses. Why did He who was seated on the throne resemble a jasper and sardine? Why was he surrounded with a rainbow of the colour of emerald?

THE OFFICER.—You know that stones are emblems of truth; that is nothing new to us. Precious stones, by their brilliancy, represent the moral condition which truth attains by a union with what is good. Colours have reference to love, we have seen, in proportion as they approach the hue of red; and to wisdom, in proportion as they incline to white. You are already aware of that, and you might have guessed, yourself, that the jasper, by its transparency, is the symbol of divine wisdom; and the sardine, which is red, is that of love. The rainbow, of the hue of the emerald, that is to say green, is the symbol of the divine sphere in the lowest degree, viz., the natural. As regards the rest, you are aware that the mystic writers, and the authors of the books of the Old Testament, everywhere make use of precious stones as figures. We shall have occasion to return to this subject afterwards.

MYSELF.—I may remark, merely, that it is very singular that the Jupiter of the heathen mythology so often takes the surname of *Petron* or *Lapis*; it seems to me an evident relic of a tradition which owed its origin to persons in a state of extasis. Our fairy tales, which are only modifications of what were in the first place truths, tell us of cities, towers, and walls of diamonds. The Orientals are very rich in this sort of descriptions; but the Orientals are naturally inclined to allegory, and have a deeper meaning than merely to dazzle the eyes. I remark, farther, that the rainbow plays a singular part in heathen mythology. It was the garment of Iris, the messenger of the gods—in other words, of her who kept up the communication between heaven and earth—between the spiritual and the natural. What do you think of this coincidence? Could the Mediator be represented otherwise than with this attribute?

THE OFFICER.—Your early education has led you to stumble on an incontestable fact. In the language of visionaries, the rainbow is the symbol of the regeneration of man. Thus, you

see, that after the deluge—that is to say, after the ruin of an ancient church—God gave this sign to the new one, in token of his alliance with it.

EUGENE.—Your details give me even greater pleasure, if that be possible, than your theory. What light do these coincidences not throw upon the Sacred Scripture ! We now come to the four-and-twenty seats around the throne, and the four-and-twenty elders who sat on them.

THE OFFICER.—Our friend very correctly said that the number twelve expresses the sum of divine blessings ; a second twelve added to the first signifies the sum of divine truths ; so that both are joined in a single number. The seer observes them on seats, because they judge the world conjointly with God, or rather God judges the world through them. These divine blessings and truths are spoken of as elders, because the judges of the Jewish people were called elders. Can you deny, now, that John saw in his vision every-thing disposed for the judgment ?

EUGENE.—It is really admirable, and cannot be refuted. Isaiah says, in fact, in express terms : Jehovah shall come in judgment, with the elders of his people. These elders have white robes and crowns of gold ; there we have again the emblems of goodness and truth. The white robe signifies the latter, and the gold the former ; the gold being in the form of a crown expresses goodness manifested by wisdom. But why did lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, issue from the throne ?

THE OFFICER.—Lightning, or flame, is the symbol of enlightenment. When we speak metaphorically, we constantly use it in that sense. Thunder, which strikes the ear, the organ of perception, is taken as the symbol of perception itself. When Jehovah appeared to Moses, the lightning signified there also the enlightenment produced by His law, and the thunder the force of the conviction they produced. The Word of God could not borrow a more magnificent, and, at the same time, a truer symbol to express its utmost force than that of thunder ; it is the most sublime of all the noises which emanate from material nature. In the natural degree, in which the visionary always retains something of his corporeal sensations, he can hear nothing sublime which is not clothed with this image. The voices simply express instruction. Heaven has given the voice, says the Psalmist : and wherefore, if it be not to instruct us ?

MYSELF.—And sometimes to enable us to quarrel ; but quarrelling is the result of evil, and we know now that the origin of evil was subsequent to that of good. Proceed, I entreat you.

THE OFFICER.—The same book of Psalms speaks, in every

page, of the lightnings which shine upon the earth, of the thunders which are heard there ; meaning always the truth which enlightens us, and echoes in our hearts. In the eighty-first Psalm, which represents Jehovah as speaking, the following language is attributed to him :—I have replied to thee with deep thunder. The two Apostles, James and John, who were destined to disseminate the Divine Word, are called by our Lord himself Boanerges—that is to say, sons of thunder—of which you can satisfy yourself by glancing at the seventeenth verse of the third chapter of St Mark's Gospel. Do you wish for anything more convincing ?

MYSELF.—It is overwhelming. I do not think you will be able to interpret as easily the sea of crystal which was before the throne. Permit me to call your attention to that. But, by-the-by, I asked you for no explanation of the first verse, where it is said that John saw a gate in heaven : the astrologers also called the signs of the zodiac gates—that of the crab was the gate of men, that of capricorn was the gate of the gods. You will most probably say, that if the heaven of the visionaries had gates, that made known by the later revelation of the astrologers must have them too. I am fully satisfied with this reason ; and the more so, that Daniel and Ezekiel, who were certainly not astrologers, also saw gates in heaven.

The extatic saw the future—the astrologer thought himself equally favoured—both, therefore, were obliged to use the same terms ; the latest, in point of time, is the copyist ; and in this case it is the astrologer. I come now to that sea supposed by the ancients to exist above the firmament ; an idea which had its origin solely, I presume, in their false system of natural philosophy—and it is only natural. Among the Indians and Arabs, the upper part of the firmament bears the name of sea. Regarding its nature, ancient astronomy has always taught us that the spheres are of crystal ; all the works on astronomy, before the time of Copernicus, mention this frequently ; Ptolemy himself calls the firmament crystalline.

THE OFFICER.—Your excellent memory would embarrass me greatly, were it not that my primitive revelation always accounts for your facts. You said that the astrologer came after the visionary. Well, the heavens of Ptolemy were subsequent to the revelation of the visionaries, who have established, since the earliest records of tradition, that, in the spiritual world, there appeared above them something like seas. This assertion, strange as it may appear, is attested in Genesis, where it is said that God separated the waters which were under the firmament from those which were above it. In the 148th Psalm, David speaks likewise of the waters which are above the firmament. You see, then, that St John here only repeats an expression which strikes you with no wonder when you

meet it in the books of Moses and David. The supposed seas of the material heavens, as you will at once conjecture, are only objects seen in the first place by visionaries. Rely on it, the material sky is only an image of the intellectual. What, then, is the meaning of these seas, if not the collective mass of every species of knowledge? We have admitted that water is a hieroglyphic of the truth; so that the sea, which is its great reservoir, is naturally the emblem of the universality of truth. Here St John saw the divine Truth, from which everything true descends, appear like a vast sea. The purity of the sea is compared to transparent crystal. There is nothing in this repugnant to the most scrupulous reason. Listen to the prophets speaking of the divine influence:—"Living waters," says Zecharias, "shall flow from Jerusalem; one part shall flow into the sea of the east, the other part into the sea of the west." The Psalmist says more plainly still—"Jehovah, thy way is in the sea;" that is not, I should presume, the natural sea. The following is a very striking illustration of this:—Jeremiah says that the sea shall rise over Babel.

MYSELF.—The sea spoken of there is the divine Truth, which rises above and subdues human error. Your explanation is close and accurate; but you quote Moses, and although this leads us away from our subject, from which we make so many digressions to the right and left, can you tell me the signification of the waters above and below the firmament? After that, we shall go on to the symbol of the four animals, which are neither constellations nor evangelists.

THE OFFICER.—If the upper waters signify divine truth, the lower represent human error; the emblems are everywhere twofold. But, in the creation, or rather in the regeneration of man, as pictured by Moses, it was necessary, after the new birth of man, that a separation of the divine truth from the errors springing from self-love should take place in him. The first are the upper waters, the latter the lower. The heaven mentioned here by Moses is the human soul, the receptacle of truth. In the soul, then, changes have taken place which the literal version seems to refer to the lower world. But we are not discussing the physical world, I repeat to you, gentlemen, but the moral world. The good and the true, which issue from God—the evil and the false, which originate in man, form the subject of the Bible from one end to the other, from the first verse of Genesis till the last of the Apocalypse.

EUGENE.—Viewed in this light, all the sacred books confirm each other, and give an appearance of truth to your critical interpretation, which, till the present moment, I have found in no system. We now come to the four animals, and I confess I discover there no semblance of probability.

THE OFFICER.—Do you recollect what I told you? To the

visionary all spiritual objects perceived in the lowest degree, not being themselves complete types of divine things, must take as their representatives emblems containing only a portion of the universal organism, or, in other terms, the figures of animals. The animals seen by St John, at the moment when all is prepared for a judgment to be pronounced by the Incarnate Word, represent, therefore, this same Word in the lowest degree; that is to say, in its literal sense. The Word, in the literal acceptation, is in the extremes; to the natural man, therefore, who is transported into a state of vision, it appears accompanied with all that appertains to the extremes. Like the celestial chart, which is also covered with animal forms, the immaterial heaven, to which the visionary ascends, only presents in its lowest degrees the representations of these objects which man sees upon the earth. It cannot be otherwise.

EUGENE.—Nothing so profound have I yet met with. Will you explain it somewhat more fully, if you please?

THE OFFICER.—The Divine Being, in his original essence, is incommunicable to man. No man can see God and live, says Moses. All the attempts which man makes to attain to the universal principle of life, terminate in thought, in an effort of the understanding. In extasis, these thoughts assume a bodily form; that you cannot deny. These bodies are veils interposed, as it were, between the divine essence and our own; they are the cherubim placed at the gate of the garden of Eden after the fall of man.

MYSELF.—Prior to the fall, then, man saw God; he walked in the garden of the intellect, without the interposition of any barrier between God and himself. So soon as he interrupted these relations, and was limited merely to what was natural, the images which he perceived became, in fact, so many jealous beings placed between him and his original principle. My objection is at an end. I greatly prefer this view of the cherubim, to considering them as intermediate beings, created prior to man, we know neither how nor why.

THE OFFICER.—Observe, that the cherubim, in the allegorical altars of the Jews, were represented as veiling the sacred image of Jehovah. These, then, were emblems of that which hinders man, when he descends to the merely natural, from beholding the face of God. The cherub guarded the tree of life, because man, having abused the communication established between him and his Creator, could no longer perceive anything but the natural objects which prevented him from penetrating into the spiritual region. The letter of the Scripture veils the divine majesty, like the cherubim; and the image of the cherubim, therefore, presents itself very naturally to St John, when he is looking at the literal Word.

These beings were plainly animals ; and the cherubim seen by Ezekiel are nothing else than the animals seen by St John.

EUGENE.—Let us resume the subject in its proper order. You say that these animals represent the Word in the literal sense. On what analogy is that founded ? I admit, with you, that the Word is God himself ; he is the Word, fixed by means of Scripture, and speaking to the heart of him who reads it. This Word, which is God himself, cannot appear under its primitive and absolute form to the visionary, who is not transported into the innermost parts of heaven, but merely into the outer limits, where alone judgment can be executed. It is not the angels of the third heaven whom the Word comes to judge, but doubtless the spirits who have departed from our world, and who, dwelling on the lowest step of the spiritual world, only see divine things under shadows accommodated to their weakness, and primitive forms in their successive degradations. This being established, John could only see the Word which came to judge them under a corresponding image. But wherefore the number four—wherefore the choice of these four animals ?

THE OFFICER.—These animals are seen around and in the midst of the throne. Examine here, again, the expressions of the visionary ; how are we to see four objects at once around and in the midst of another ? It is only in dreams that this can be done. I conclude that this must mean the Lord himself. In fact, what issues from his throne, if not his manifestation ? and what other manifestation is there to us but his Word itself ? Four signifies all, in reference to good, as the Word is all to us in reference to life. The first animal resembled a lion ; the lion is the emblem of strength and power. There is no naturalist who will contest this. Isaiah compares Jehovah to a lion that roars. No real power exists if not based on truth, and the latter is assuredly his Word. The second resembled a calf, and this animal signifies the love of what is true. The different beasts of the earth are images of the affections. Malachi says that those who love justice increase like young fatted calves. The Egyptians, who loved the sciences, fashioned for themselves calves, as an emblem of this affection. Following their example, the children of Israel made for themselves calves in the desert ; and then, taking the image for the reality, they adored the calf of gold. Hosea reproached the Jews with sacrificing man, and worshipping calves : There, says Isaiah, the calf will come to feed. The third animal had a face like that of a man. Man is the emblem of wisdom, since he is the receptacle of it, his peculiar privilege being the faculty of raising his understanding above his passions—a privilege which distinguishes him from the brute. In Ezekiel, Jehovah says—You, my flock, are a man.

The fourth animal was an eagle—the symbol of intellect with all poets, as with all philosophers. We say, ourselves, an eagle eye, to express the piercing look of genius. Those who wait on Jehovah, says Isaiah, rise with their wings like eagles. These four animals were full of eyes, before and behind, adds St John. Aro not those the divine truths of the Word?

MYSELF.—Dupnis says that they represent the stars, which are, in fact, the eyes of heaven. Argus was all covered with eyes, like your beasts. The eyes of heaven, as Manilius himself calls the stars, is a bold and striking figure of the truths formerly perceived by the visionaries who gave us the primitive revelation. You mentioned the cherub armed with a flaming sword, who guarded the entrance of Paradise, and veiled from man the abode of delights: do you know that the celestial sphere has preserved this image? At the spring equinox, before the rising of the sun the conqueror of darkness, the constellation of Perseus appears, armed with a sword, and called by the Arabs Cherub. Is not that the veil prudently interposed between the earth and the orb which gives it life—between man and his Author? You did not quote that passage in Exodus, where it is said that the cherubim were painted upon the veil of the tabernacle. They are, evidently therefore, objects which conceal the supreme majesty; and nothing answers better to this than the word literally understood, in which God dwells though the eye cannot perceive him. You omitted to mention the seven lamps burning before the throne: the partisans of sacred astronomy will tell you that they are the seven celestial torches, or planets, kindled by the sun.

THE OFFICER.—I did not speak of them, because St John himself says that they are the seven spirits of God; that is to say, the enlightenment which proceeds from him alone. To view them as the seven planets is contrary to common sense, for the ancients did not look on the sun as fixed in the centre of the planetary system.

MYSELF.—You are right; but what do you make of the six wings of these cherubim? Four times six make twenty-four; and may not this astronomical number refer to the twenty-four hours of the day, which are indeed furnished by the four animals, if these are considered as four constellations of the zodiac? Wings among the ancients were the ordinary symbol of time, and of the revolutions of the fixed stars.

THE OFFICER.—To the visionary the wings are organs. In animals they take the same place that the arms do in man; and, like the arms, they signify power. It is useless to insist upon this speaking emblem; it is through the arm that man exercises his power. The number six is the product of three

multiplied by two. The number two signifies all with regard to good, and three all with regard to truth; their product, therefore, is evidently mystic.

EUGENE.—We shall never have done with this commentary, which is getting somewhat diffuse already, if we do not agree upon the following point. None of us is a visionary, therefore none of us can be assured by experience of the truth of the narrative of St John. What means have we of ascertaining that the explanations given us are not arbitrary? I think we may do so by comparing, as we have done, the passages of the Apocalypse with those of the Old Testament in which similar expressions are employed; by that means, if we do not arrive at absolute truth, we shall attain at least to relative truth. We can then conclude with certainty that St John has not invented these images, for others, in the same condition as he, have seen them also. Now, as these four animals are also to be found in Ezekiel, St John is thus absolved from the charge of producing something absolutely unknown in the language of visionaries.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely so. Ezekiel, in his first chapter, also sees these four animals, but joined in one, as sometimes happens to persons in extasis, and each of them with four faces; that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. In the Hebrew language, they are called *Chajoth*, which is derived from *Chaja*—life. Ezekiel and St John resemble each other, without the latter's having copied the former; in fact, the one described the phases of the Jewish, the other those of the Christian Church. In all times, human affairs have followed the same progression, have had the same end, and, consequently, have been expressed, through the agency of reason, by the same ideas; and through the agency of extasis by the same images. Dupuis acknowledges himself that Ezekiel and St John have drawn their images from the same source. We do not contradict it; only this source, in our idea, is not astrology, but extasis. Our four animals are therefore to be found in the Old Testament in the narrative of another visionary, and are there, as here, emblems of spiritual things. The remainder of the chapter is now easily understood. These animals, says St John, had no rest day or night. The Word instructs man unceasingly; and the hymn of the animals, which ascribes glory to God, is the hymn which it teaches us in every page. You see, at the same time, the four-and-twenty elders prostrating themselves, and casting down their crowns before God; a striking image, which tells us that all possible good, and all possible truth, come from God, and that man should acknowledge that wisdom and glory belong to him alone. You see that, in viewing the narrative of St John as a dream, we still preserve its vague and indeterminate character; whilst, by comparing it

with the pictures given by the prophets, we stamp this vision with that seal of sanctity which our reason could not otherwise grant it. St John speaks as the inhabitant of a country which we cannot visit of ourselves ; and, in order to ascertain if his account is conformable to the geography of the world of spirits, we have simply to compare it with the descriptions of those who have visited this country before him.

EUGENE.—The vagueness which remains, is merely that which we might expect to feel after having seen a phantom or a cloud, the proportions of which we cannot measure exactly. The shade of Achilles glided from the embraces of Ulysses ; the shades evoked by the Apostle must produce a similar effect on the living, and cannot, indeed, from their nature, produce any other.

MYSELF.—Let us take breath for a moment before we resume our flight. So far, we have run through four chapters. In the first, the Lord manifested himself to St John with the attributes which Truth personified may be expected to assume in the eyes of a visionary. In the third and fourth, we saw the counsels given by Wisdom to man, counsels calculated to suit every condition of his spiritual life. Then the Church being warned, the visionary passes to the event which is to mark its consummation. In the fourth chapter, everything is prepared for the judgment. The fifth, with the aid of these preliminaries, is understood without difficulty, as the result of that which we have just read ; in fact, we find there presented to us, under the emblem of a book, the revelation which has emanated from supreme Love, and which no one on the earth can make known but the divine Truth, represented by the Lamb. Upon all these facts we are agreed, and, in studying the chapter attentively, I find absolutely nothing that puzzles me. I even read it with a certain pleasure, proud as I am of my perspicuity. The Apostle says that no one can open this book, neither in heaven, nor upon the earth, nor under the earth. To us there is nothing under the earth ; but to a visionary, who is in the spiritual world, I conceive that something may exist there. That world is, indeed, beyond the limits of space ; but man, carrying with him his earthly sensations, can perceive nothing there without the appearance of space. No one, says St John, could open this book, nor look at it ; the latter is a singular expression unless it means that nothing could be discovered in it. But why these two emblems applied to the same being—the one the victorious lion, the other the slain lamb ? could the Lord be both at the same time ?

THE OFFICER.—As the conqueror of evil, he is the lion of the tribe of Judah. The lion, as we have seen, is the emblem of the power of the truth. Judah, in the Word, everywhere signifies the Church. Denied and misunderstood with regard to

his divine nature, the Lord appears under the form of a lamb slain. In the first chapter, the Lord says himself, I have been dead, and I am now living; is not that sufficient to account for the prophet seeing the lamb as if he had been slain? Observe, however, how the vague nature of the dream is maintained; this lamb that was slain is standing on his feet, and he takes the book from the hand of the Most High! How can we conceive of a lamb slain, and yet erect, and taking a book, if we do not make allowance for the sensations of an extatic? There is no painter capable of expressing such a scene.

MYSELF.—Pardon me; the vignette on the title-page of the Apoccalypse of Don Calmet represents a man with arms and legs like ourselves, and with the head of a lamb. Observe to what we are reduced, when, through a superstitious respect for the sacred writings, we attempt to discover in them something more than what they really contain. However, Don Calmet did not venture to represent the seven eyes and the seven horns with which St John endows the mystic lamb.

THE OFFICER.—The seven eyes represent the omniscience of the Lord; the seven horns his omnipotence. Every place in the Word where mention is made of the horn, it expresses power. I will break the horns of the impious, and the horns of the just shall be raised high, says the Psalmist. Jeremiah says that the horn of Moab has been plucked out. Moab signifies, in the Bible, natural good. Jehovah, says the Psalmist again, has raised the horn of his people. Habakkuk says expressly that the horns of Jehovah manifest his power. It was natural, therefore, for St John to see this emblem when contemplating divine truth.

MYSELF.—The most superficial acquaintance with natural history confirms this interpretation. Every one knows that the strength of an animal lies in his horns. The ploughmen of France always yoke the ox by his horns. Nothing is more satisfactory than these explanations, although there is no more justice in requiring a visionary to say why such a sentiment has such or such a form, than there would be in calling on us to explain why earthly bodies have such or such appearances. I am most anxious, however, that you should explain the particular connexion which exists between the lamb and the Lord himself.

THE OFFICER.—This is the most important emblem of the whole book, and it would not be amiss to dwell for a little on it. In the hieroglyphic language of visionaries, the lamb is the emblem of goodness and innocence; and it is precisely those qualities which constitute heaven. A heart as simple as a lamb is the condition requisite for receiving the truth. It is innocence alone, in fact, which hears and receives the instructions of wisdom: this is too evident to need proof.

EUGENE.—It is the moral of the romance of the *Indian Cottage*. If pride takes the place of innocence in the heart of man, it is certain that he will never receive the truth. Filled with a sense of his own importance, he becomes his own god; and how, then, is God to find access to him? There is a profound lesson concealed under this emblem. Divine love, entering into the heart of man to drive from it impure love and maddening follies, could take no other emblem than the lamb. Man fell through pride and selfishness, and can only return to God by innocence and simplicity of heart. The noblest of poems contains no allegory so true and touching as that which is here presented to us by the Apocalypse! The primitive revelation represented the Mediator under the symbol of a lamb, because it never conceived of anything but innocence as capable of leading man back to God.

MYSELF.—Your philosophy is most close and accurate. You are aware, besides, that the emblem of the lamb is not confined to the Bible. Primitive revelation had employed it before. This revelation used the Sun as the emblem of the Deity, and gave to this Sun the attribute of the Lamb, which in the Gospel is applied to Jesus, as the emblem of the Divinity. I recollect having read in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobus, that the Naxians adored Apollo under the name of the God with the fleece of a lamb; and was not this Apollo a shepherd god, as Jesus Christ is God and Shepherd? I formerly believed that the Lord was figured as a lamb to shew that he was a victim offered for the expiation of our sins; but this opinion, which was taken from the literal sense of the word, is paltry and narrow, and is, besides, contrary to the light of reason. I ask you, what would you think of a God who could exact from his son so bloody a sacrifice for the expiation of our faults? This dogma may touch us with compassion for the victim; but what must we think and feel of him who could give the command? If, on the contrary, we look on the mediation as the act by which Truth, descending into the extremes of nature, reconciles us with that Love which the thought conceives of as the universal being in the highest degree, we see why the Redeeming Lamb, or the Lord in his human nature, is presented under the symbol of the only faculty which can reconcile us with the Divinity. This mediation is worthy of our highest admiration and love. By this means we are able to consider Jesus Christ as God; on any other hypothesis we are tempted to become Socinians. In fact, their objection to the generally received doctrine is very powerful. Do you really mean to assert, ask they, that the God who created this glorious earth, with all its tribes of animated beings, and not only this earth but countless other celestial bodies far more glorious, dwelt in the person of a Jew for thirty-three years? No, we reply;

but, without asserting this, we may suppose that Universal, Divine Love, could diffuse life throughout the entire domain of creation, and, at the same time, that the Truth emanating from him might become incarnate in the human species. But we are forgetting the lamb. Does the Scripture apply this epithet to the Lord in any other place, as St John does in this passage ?

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah says of him, in the forty-third chapter, that he shall be led like a lamb to the slaughter ; in the first verse of the sixteenth chapter he cries : Lord, send thy Lamb, the conqueror of the earth. The prophet, John the Baptist, seeing Jesus coming to him, said : Behold the Lamb of God ; the next day, seeing Jesus pass, he again exclaimed : Behold the Lamb of God. The rest of the chapter is not figurative ; it is a hymn, such as we find in books of devotion.

MYSELF.—Except, however, that the elders and the four animals, who chant this hymn, hold in their hands harps and cups of gold filled with perfumes. That surely conceals a mystical sense !

THE OFFICER.—Stringed instruments, like harps and lyres, correspond, in the Biblical style, to spiritual truths. Those instruments are often named by the Psalmist. It is unnecessary to remind you that St John does not speak of real harps, but of praise. Praise, considered without reference to the abstract sense of the word, and assuming a body, presents itself in the form of a harp or lyre to the eyes of the visionary, who carries with him the recollections of his earthly life. According to the statements of clairvoyants, the voices of spirits are heard like the sound of different instruments, although there are no real instruments. As for the cups of gold filled with perfumes, this is their signification. Perfumes are the emblems of spiritual benefits ; the cups containing them are taken for the perfumes themselves, following the usage common to every language, of designating the contents by what contains them. The Jews had two altars—the one for sacrifices, the other for incense. The latter, which was placed in the tabernacle, was called the golden altar. In Malachi, Jehovah speaks thus : Incense is everywhere offered to my name. We read in Deuteronomy : They shall place perfume under your nostrils. A thousand passages confirm this sense. Hence the custom of burning incense in churches is preserved to the present day. When the three kings of the East came to Bethlehem, they offered to the Lord, as you are aware, gold, incense, and myrrh : the gold signifies celestial good, the incense spiritual good, and the myrrh natural good. You see that our degrees exist everywhere. St John calls the perfumes the prayers of saints. It is evident that

the eaints here spoken of being those who follow goodness and truth, we are to understand by their prayers the aspirations of faith and love. What are prayers, in fact, if they be not animated by faith and love? Do not take these saints for individuals; they are plainly metaphysical abstractions personified. The four animals proclaim that God alone is holy. Thus, when the elders sing: You have made us kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth: we must understand by kings the truth, by priests the good. Their reign is that of Jesus Christ in their hearts; *the earth* signifies the Church.

MYSELF.—Looking at the chapter in another point of view, I see it speaks of a book closed with seven seals. The astrologers also represent the great book of Destiny as closed with seven seals, and containing seven leaves. Could astrology have employed Destiny as an emblem of the divine Word? I think I can find some grounds for this opinion. Do not superstitious people in the present day believe that the future is revealed to him who consults the Bible at hazard? and have they not sought, with curiosity, their destiny in its pages? Dupuis says, when speaking of the lamb and the lion which figure here, that astrology alone can explain how the same being is represented at the same time under the form of a lion and that of a lamb. Clairvoyance explains this perfectly. This slain lamb reminds us of the Mithra of the Persians, who was put to death by Ahrimanes, and who was to reappear in a new earth. A new religion, doubtless, is meant by this appearance.

The Persians consecrated the bull to Mithra; does it follow from this that St John has only applied to the ram that which was formerly said of the following sign? But if St John intended to establish the celestial sphere precisely as it existed in his time, he would, in quoting the four mysterious animals, have placed the crab in the summer solstice instead of the lion, and changed the order of the three other constellations. I cannot see any trace of astrology in that; but I do see clearly enough the same images under which the prophets, who were the authors of the primitive revelation, saw the same event.

EUGENE.—This is an important question. It leads us to the consideration of all the cosmogonies of antiquity. We know enough of them to lead us to look on the Apocalypse as something more than an arbitrary description, an astronomical exercise, or a plagiarism on the Bible. We have the certainty that it is the narrative of impressions received by a visionary or clairvoyant. But before we can come to any practical conclusion, we must have a detailed account of the spiritual regions, and an exact idea of the sensations which man receives in a state of vision. This knowledge, added to the striking coincidences which we have already perceived between

the visions of St John and those of the Old Testament prophets, would give our opinion on this subject the force of philosophical truth—a truth fully capable of demonstration, and impossible to be refuted. In fact, suppose that one of us could see the world into which St John obtained an entrance, is it not clear that this fact would stamp our faith with the seal of certainty?

THE OFFICER.—If, after we have finished our critical examination, you still retain the same respect for the Apocalypse, I shall shew you the other world, not like the priests of the cave of Trophonius, but by placing in your hands sound and valuable books to study—books in which sterling faith, purified from all illusion, has imparted the most interesting information respecting it. To-morrow, then, we set out for that other world.

CHAPTER VI.

Rev., chaps. vi. and vii.

THE FIRST DIVINE INFLUENCE.

THE OFFICER.—When we parted yesterday, you expressed an anxious wish, my friends, to visit the other world. Well, let us commence the journey with St John. What he describes there has no connexion with the communions established on earth ; I mean those which are designated, incorrectly enough, the Roman and the Reformed. The scenes he represents here you might read as the 6th book of the *Æneid*. It is an excursion made with apparitions through a land of shadows. You will see them judged by divine justice, and ascending to heaven, or descending to hell. Do you not fear being lost with me in this fathomless abyss of mystery ?

EUGENE.—I am quite disposed to believe that men, after death, inhabit the world, or in other words, pass to the state, whither extatics are transported. This once admitted, it is natural to imagine them, at some time or other, ascending to heaven, or descending to hell. The mode of expression is conformable to reason, but of the manner in which the change is effected I know nothing. St John says he has beheld it ; well, then, let us listen to him with attention. A visionary will see corporeal forms where I only behold moral ideas. Your interpretation will, perhaps, satisfy me ; but, as yet, I have never been able to comprehend these two chapters. Dupuis leaves them quite unexplained ; and Bossuet says less than nothing, for he merely sees in them a judgment pronounced upon the Jews, because the twelve tribes of Israel are named there. Nothing can be more flimsy than such reasoning.

MYSELF.—I am myself tempted to look upon them as an excursion to the other world, and as having no connexion at all with ours ; for, considering our globe as it really is, I cannot imagine the stars falling to earth, the sun turning to sackcloth, and the moon to blood, the heavens being rolled up like a scroll, and the mountains removed out of their places. What

universal overthrow! and all *before* the appearance of Antichrist. Nothing could be more terrible than this scene of the last judgment. But you say it all passes in the world of spirits. Then I comprehend all. The moment we enter this spirit world in imagination, our minds accept any change, however strange, and we have no difficulty in following you. I believe all; for to do so we have simply to believe in the immortality of the soul.

If man lives after death, he must be somewhere, in some state; he must think, or speak, or act in some manner. That granted, he must of necessity either ascend towards heaven, or descend towards hell; that is, he will either be happy or unhappy, after a certain manner.

What is perpetually passing in the spirit-land, though unseen by us, was visible to St John through the eyes of the spirit. Think you that the extatic state is given to man, merely that he may read his neighbour's thoughts, like the somnambulists of the magnetisers? No, certainly; but as a means of communication between our world and the other; and I believe that pagan fable meant to designate this prophetic faculty under the emblems of those privileged men it speaks of, who could live at once in both worlds. The descent of Ulysses into hell is a picture loaded with ornament; but the belief in the possibility of such a descent must have served as a basis for the fable. I can imagine, also, that Proserpine, living six months on earth, and six months in the realms of darkness, was meant to typify the faculty of holding communication with both worlds.

But I weary you, perhaps, with my digressions. Let us proceed to the four horses of the Apocalypse, which have played such a distinguished part ever since in our old chronicles.

THE OFFICER.—The sixth chapter commences, indeed, with a strange scene. The Lamb opens the book, and breaks the seals; that is to say, he alone knows the secrets of all hearts, and judges accordingly. After that, each of the four beasts announces the approach of a horse, which immediately appears upon the scene. Before we investigate the meaning of these four horses, I ought to remind you of what we stated concerning the hieroglyphic of the horse in general, viz., that it is the ordinary symbol of intellect. The metaphoric style has even adopted this interpretation, by comparing all the actions of the intellect to the movements of a horse. It is said of a fool that he is on his hobby; of a poet, that he has mounted his Pegasus. We talk of curbing the spirit; of the reins of the understanding; we say that the imagination gallops, and the mind kicks against such a thing. In Ezekiel, the Lord says, You shall be filled at my table with the flesh of horses and the flesh of warriors. Does not that mean the

truths of the understanding? We shall meet this expression again in the Apocalypsc. Habakkuk, speaking to the Lord, says: Thou that didst ride upon thine horses; and again, Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses.

Zechariah makes Jehovah say: I will cut off the horse from Jerusalem; and, again: In that day I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; I will smite every horse of the people with blindness. According to the meaning I have given, that is all comprehensible; taken literally, it has no sense whatever. Zechariah, also announcing a better future to the Church, says: In that day all the ornaments of the horses shall be consecrated to the Lord; and Isaiah exclaims: Behold Jehovah riding upon a cloud as upon a horse. In speaking also of the merely worldly wisdom displayed by the debased Egyptians, he expresses himself thus energetically: Their horses are flesh, and not spirit. From all these quotations, it is evident the prophets looked on the horse as the symbol of understanding. Zechariah, speaking of those who reject the true doctrine, says: The riders on horses shall be confounded; namely, those who trust simply to their own reason.

EUGENE.—Your brilliant erudition has fully proved your position; but we may proceed to consider the horses themselves. White is the emblem of truth; and the white horse is the pure and perfect understanding of the thing figured by the four beasts. Now these four animals symbolise the letter of the Holy Word; consequently the white horse signifies the true comprehension of it. This meaning seems incontrovertible. St John adds that He who rode the horse carried a bow, and they gave him a crown. Let us hear your explanation of these adjuncts.

THE OFFICER.—The bow, being a weapon of war, figures the perpetual combat of Truth against Falsehood. We have seen already how the sword proceeding from the mouth of the Lord had the same emblematical meaning. Isaiah, too, uses the figure: The arrows of Jehovah, he says, are sharp, and all his bows bent. Habakkuk says of Jehovah: He came riding upon horses, and his bow was made bare. Here still the bow is emblematic of truth combating error. Jeremiah, however, uses the symbol in the opposite sense, and makes it the instrument employed by Falsehood to combat Truth. Speaking of the wicked, he says: They have bent their bows; that is, of lies, not of truth. The Psalmist also represents the ungodly as bending their bows. So we may affirm, that both Truth and Falsehood are alike indicated in Holy Scripture by the symbolic bows and arrows. The war, in fact, of the prophetic writers, means spiritual war; for, indeed, it is the only real war, being a war of principles. Even the cuffs and blows of children result merely from some previous dispute, as the encounter of

two armies from some conflicting opinions. Material war is, in a word, nothing else than spiritual war manifested, for you must perceive at once that war exists in thought before it becomes act.

EUGÈNE.—Thus the combats of Satan may have been true combats, though the extatics have given them a character which often makes us smile. These people can only see ideas under palpable forms; and when they tell us they behold such and such forms in heaven, we laugh, and turn on our heel. But the sage will at once perceive that the visionary can only express himself by means of the sensations which he had received on earth. Before the discovery of artillery, extatics beheld the combat between Truth and Error as a combat with arrows; an extatic of our time would represent it by muskets and cannon. But does it follow from these mere modes of expression, that arrows and material balls are really employed in heaven? Poor human nature, what deep darkness envelopes thee! Thou art scarcely fit yet to read the Apocalypse.

MYSELF.—Yet the emblem specified by St John is a very just symbol, and one employed by the ancients likewise. Pagan fable gave a bow to the Centaur Chiron, the preceptor of Achilles, whose combats form the theme of the *Iliad*; and Hercules, as well as Orion, was represented armed with a bow.

THE OFFICER.—It is superfluous to discuss the meaning of the crown upon the rider, for it is evidently an ornament in honour of the intellect, since it is placed upon the head, where intellect dwells. I shall pass on, therefore, to the *second* horseman, with his red horse and great sword, that brings war amongst the nations. Red here is the infernal colour, sombre and dark, and signifies a warrior for the false against the true. Zechariah saw likewise a red horse among the myrtles. The sword signifies the tongue, an instrument, saith Æsop, capable of much good and much evil. The *third* horseman, having a pair of scales in his hand, is mounted on a black horse, which colour is the emblem of destroyed intellect. Black is the opposite of white—one reflects all colours, the other absorbs all. Common sense will tell you there can be no other signification. Has not the kingdom of evil been always figured by darkness? In a word, black is the absence of all colour, as evil the negation of all good.

In speaking of hell, do not the poets represent it as a sombre land of shadows? The sun, moon, and stars, shall be darkened, says Joel. The day shall darken upon the prophets, says Micah. Ezekiel addresses the wicked: In the day thou descendest into hell, I will blacken Libanus upon thee.

MYSELF.—Black, then, is absolute error; but how is it that error is represented with a pair of scales?—that would seem to me the attribute of justice.

THE OFFICER.—In general, the balance signifies the evaluation of the good and the true. Isaiah asks: Who has weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in scales? In the physical heaven this sign has been placed, no doubt, to express the equal division, at the equinox, of day and night—the emblems of truth and error.

MYSELF.—The balance, however, was not known as a sign until the age of Augustus. The scorpion occupied two places before that, and then withdrew its claws, as the flattering Virgil says, to make room for this attribute of the equitable Octavius. However, I shall not cavil with you on the point, for this same balance was represented in the ancient spheres almost in the same place. The celestial virgin held it in her hand, which changed her to a Themis. If this virgin was originally meant to represent the doctrine of truth, the balance was a fitting emblem; but I do not see how it harmonises with the black horse or his rider.

THE OFFICER.—As he who rides the red horse bears a sword, like Christ himself, so Error holds in his hand the symbol of truth. But this instrument, so useless in the hands of the rider, figures man deprived of all means that could enable him to judge, weigh, and appreciate; while the empty scales typify doctrine reduced to nullity.

When this rider appears, it is said, a measure of wheat will be sold for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see that the wine and oil are not injured. By mention of this insignificant coin, the extatic wishes to symbolise that the Good and True are reduced to naught; for by wheat is typified good, and by barley truth. The numeral attached to the barley is larger, because there may be many truths, though but one good; besides, three is the symbolical number for truth. Oil and wine represent, in liquids, the same as wheat and barley in solids, and a charge is given not to spoil them—that is, not to pervert good, nor destroy true doctrine.

MYSELF.—That is all comprehensible; but let us see if your explanation holds good when we analyse the four emblems. Wheat signifies good. That is likely, considering it is the base of all nourishment amongst every nation. It may symbolise good in St John, as well as in the Eucharist; and, therefore, I make no difficulty in admitting the figure; but I do not see any reason for supposing that by the barley is meant truth.

EUGENE.—We cannot demand from an extatic the reason of his representing ideas under certain forms, but we can try if other extatics have likewise enveloped the same idea in the same symbol. Let us see, for instance, if wheat and barley are employed as emblems in other parts of Scripture with the same signification that I have given here.

THE OFFICER.—Joel, speaking of the spiritual harvest,

under the emblem of the natural harvest, names only these two grains like St John. They have lanced bitterly, he says, for the wheat and the barley, for the harvest has perished. And Isaiah tells us that the labourer sows wheat by measure and chosen barley. In Deuteronomy, it is promised to Israel, whom the Lord is conducting towards the true Church : The Lord will bring thee to the land of wheat and barley. As under every symbol in Scripture the good and true are still represented, so, if we take wheat as the type of good, barley must, of necessity, signify the true. When this truth is corrupted, barley still serves as its emblem. Thus, when Ezekiel represents the fallen state of the Jewish Church, he was bid to eat a barley cake, baked with dung, as emblematic of the gross errors in which the Jewish people lived. And to figure the adultery of the same people, the prophet Hosea was desired to take an adulterous woman, bought with a measure and a half of barley. Is not that to represent truth perverted ?

MYSELF.—Your quotations certainly cover St John with an impenetrable buckler. The whole Scripture seems ready to support and defend him. Without your aid, I should have believed the barley was a mere arbitrary expression of his own. The signification of the oil and wine is more evident ; for, still keeping to the idea of the good and true, I see the first in oil, which enters into all religious ceremonies as typical of divine love. Therefore it was that oil of anointing was in use amongst the ancients ; and that wine is the emblem of truth, there can be no doubt. *In vino veritas.*

In the Lord's Supper, where we receive the good and true, bread has been selected to represent the former, and wine the latter.

THE OFFICER.—It is so evident that by wine is meant truth throughout all Scripture, that I need not pause to collect proofs, but shall merely offer a few remarks, and ask you to observe that if the Church is always designated as the Lord's vineyard, it is, without doubt, because wine proceeds from it as truth from God. Christ also says to his disciples that he will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until he drinks it new in his Father's kingdom. Any one of intellect can see that he alludes here to the truth which he will then make known to them.

The Hebrews, in their sacrifices, poured libations of wine ; and remember, in the parable of the man wounded by thieves, the good Samaritan is represented as pouring oil and wine upon his wounds. Is not this wounded man humanity itself, struck down by evil and falsehood ? And the oil and wine, are they not what alone can heal him—the good and true ?

EUGENE.—Here are proofs enough to convince the most

obstinate sceptic, much less critics like us, who are already predisposed to believe all for which there seems moral evidence. Therefore let us now proceed to consider the pale horse, with his rider. St John says the rider was Death. And could Death be characterised more forcibly? *Pallida mors!* says Horace. And is not paleness an indication that life is extinct? Hell follows this rider; for the death signified is spiritual death.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely; and everywhere in the Old Testament hell is mentioned conjointly with the death of the soul. The Psalmist exclaims: The bonds of death are round me; the bonds of hell are round me. Again, in another place, speaking of those in whom, like this rider, all spiritual life is dead, he says with great poetic grandeur: They shall be set like a flock in hell; death shall pasture on them. It is clear that spiritual death is meant here, for in hell there is no longer material death. After the destruction of the body, all is finished. It is only on earth that material death can feed on its sad victims.

Power was given to this rider to kill men in the four parts of the earth by the sword, by famine, pestilence, and the beasts of the earth. Is not this saying that, wherever spiritual death reigns—wherever the good and true have perished amongst men—they will die by the sword, emblem of falsehood; by famine, emblem of the negation of all spiritual aliment; by that cadaverous selfishness which shuts up a man within himself alone; and, lastly, by wild beasts, or disordered passions? Is it not clear that, if the sword symbolises active falsehood, famine means the privation of all good? They shall be consumed, says Jeremiah, by the sword and by famine. Behold, says Isaiah, two scourges that shall come on thee, the sword and famine. But I could enumerate a thousand passages of the same import, were it not quite unnecessary with minds like yours. Death, indeed, is a fit symbol for that fatal plague of *self* which taints all men who are deprived of the holy influence of religion. They are in reality dead, for life is only to be found in union with God. The wild beasts are evil passions; no proofs are wanting to confirm this assertion. Everywhere throughout the Scripture, lambs are used as emblems of the faithful within the Church. Ezekiel, using the same type, says: The lambs, without a shepherd, will become the prey of all the wild beasts of the field; and again: I will gorge the wild beasts of all the earth with thee.

St Mark, too, describing the spiritual temptation of Christ, says that, being in the desert, He was with the wild beasts, and that the angels ministered to Him; that is to say, the desert was the barren Church of the epoch; the wild beasts the evil influences that reigned there; and the angels were good thoughts dwelling within Jesus alone. Observe that He

is called here Jesus, not Christ, because the former name has reference only to affection or Love.

MYSELF.—What distinction is there between the two names ?

THE OFFICER.—Jesus is the Divinity as regards the Good ; Christ the same Divinity, as regards the True. Thus, you see, the first of these names designates rather an object of love, and the second an object of faith. Women, with their fervent souls, in which love is the ruling sentiment, oftener appeal to Him as “ Jesus,” the gentle, compassionate Jesus ; while men, in whom faith is the strongest principle, as amongst Protestants, have no other God but “ Christ.” Everywhere you still observe the Good and the True. And the Evil principle has likewise two names : Devil, as regards Evil ; Satan, as regards Falsehood—one tempts the will, the other the understanding.

EUGENE.—I never heard these views of the subject before. What universal results you can elicit from such simple elements ! The clue of Ariadne has not indeed broken in your hands. Here we have the four horsemen clearly explained, and find in them the emblems of the True Understanding of the divine Word, of Infernal Love, of the Darkness of the Intellect, and the Death of the Soul.

After that, St John sees under the altar the souls of those who suffered death for the testimony they had given. These poor souls demand justice, and white robes are given them, with an exhortation to wait yet a little longer, until they are joined by other souls who have to suffer death likewise, and complete their number. What means, I pray you, this strange scene ?

THE OFFICER.—It passes in the spiritual world, therefore its strangeness ought not to surprise you. You are not to look for the natural order of things there, nor do I pretend that such is to be found. Hold firm, and remember we are no longer upon earth. Bossuet sees in these souls those of the martyrs. St John means by them spiritual-minded people, who live in the midst of a carnal world. These are the true martyrs, as you shall see.

They appear to the prophet under the altar, to signify the true worship of God, in which they lived. Nor is this a mere imagination of the inspired extatic. We find the same state of things on earth—the spiritual world is conformable to the natural. You shall be hated for my sake, saith Christ to his disciples ; and men who hate virtue and truth here below, will continue to hate it in the other world. Our passions follow us thither.

EUGENE.—Even if this were not a vision of St John’s, it would be a conception of the highest philosophy. For these martyrs, are they not the just complaining to God of the evil that surrounds them ? And the complaint is natural, and will never

cease until man, cleansed from all stain, rises to heaven like a pure thought, leaving sin and impurity behind him.

THE OFFICER.—But you are rising into poetry, while we are only dealing with facts.

MYSELF.—Facts in the Apocalypse ! Ah ! that is going too far.

THE OFFICER.—Zechariah, whose glance could penetrate the spiritual world, as well as St John's, saw there sheep slaughtered in the shambles by their owners ; and the Psalmist makes them speak thus : We have been killed every day ; we are counted as sheep that ought to be slain ; Jehovah, do not Thou forsake us. How perfectly this agrees with the words of St John ! And even in this world, do not we all feel like these suffering souls, when surrounded by evil and immoral natures ?

The white robe given to each signifies not the earthly robe of martyrs, but the vestment of pure truth ; and does not that descend on the heart of every man who prays for it ? Amongst the ancients, the robe had this signification likewise, as we observed when treating of this sort of correspondence in the first chapter of the book.

The souls were bid to rest yet for a little season. Observe, first, that to the extatic there is no such thing as time ; therefore the words that express it are not to be taken literally ; we must understand the spiritual state which time is meant to typify.

St John seeing the judgments accomplishing, describes the different impressions produced on him, as if they succeeded each other according to our notion of time, whereas all passes for him in the present, as well as for Isaiah, who was witness of a like event. Ye dead shall arise, exclaims the prophet, or rather the truly sublime poet : Awake, and rejoice, ye inhabitants of the dust. Go, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut close the door, remain hid *yet a little while*, until the wrath is past ; for, behold, Jehovah comes to visit the inhabitants of the earth. You see by this, that St John has uttered nothing more singular than Isaiah ; you also perceive that he is a visionary, yet not one who raves incoherently, otherwise his pictures would not be so similar to those of Isaiah. Observe, too, the expression, *yet a little while* ; it is not real duration, but an impression that recalls an idea of it.

MYSELF.—In order to see the meaning clearly, let us look over the chapter again. The book was sealed with seven seals, of which we have already gone through the opening of five by the Lamb. The four first were the four horses, the fifth the souls hidden under the altar. Now, to finish the chapter, we have only to examine the signification of the sixth. The seventh is not opened for us till the eighth chapter. Thus, all

we have been analysing as yet is the preparation made in the world of spirits before the coming of the final judgment. The fifth seal, I confess, has not yet been altogether opened for me, because I am unable to comprehend objects like a visionary ; but I admit the plausibility of your hypothesis ; especially as all other modes of explaining this singular scene seemed to me a most pitiable waste of intellect. Is it not better to refer all that appears incomprehensible and extravagant to the sensations of an extatic, the inhabitant of a world where forms and appearances are created and destroyed instantaneously by thought, than to endeavour to bring them into harmony with a world like ours, where all is fixed and immutable ? Your souls killed spiritually in the other world shock my reason less, than to suppose an allusion made here to the mere history of those who suffered martyrdom on earth.

Your idea of a spiritual state being substituted for our notion of time, is profoundly philosophical, and I congratulate you on the episode from the history of spirits.

EUGENE.—For want of knowing this theory, Bossuet says, ingenuously, that the white robes of which we have spoken, signify the glory of saintly souls awaiting the resurrection. What a poor explanation !

The sixth seal shews us the sun black as sackcloth ; the moon like blood. There is a mighty earthquake, and the stars fall from their places like untimely figs. The heaven is rolled up as a scroll ; the mountains are moved ; and men hide themselves in the dens and rocks, saying to the mountains : Fall on us. I confess that I would rather contemplate this scene as a grand vision passing before the mind in the nature of a dream, than to explain it all away as a mere barren allusion to certain public calamities, as Bossuet has done. In great misfortunes, he says, men feel as if the whole order of nature were reversed, for to those who perish all seems perishing ; according to him, therefore, St John merely paints human misfortunes in an allegory, from which we may infer that all the prophets have been only makers of fables and allegories, notwithstanding their express declaration that they have beheld and spoken, being in a vision. Our theory seems more reasonable. We take the prophets at their word ; believe literally what they tell us ; but seek for the scenes they depict, not in this, but in the other world, where form is subservient to thought.

THE OFFICER.—Material nature is the lowest degree, where creative power stops. It is that of effects. Time and space are there the essential conditions of all action ; and by placing nature under these controlling limitations, the Creator has assured to all generations constant and fixed laws. But the empire of thought is not subjected to these two modes of existence ; it is, in fact, free and unfettered as thought itself.

The ideas perceived by the soul clothe themselves in exterior forms, but these forms have all the movement and variety of the ideas which produce them. By the aid of this theory, you can easily examine the strange overthrow of all order recorded by St John, without your heads being turned. You may even believe in it without superstition, and see all nature blended in confusion before your eyes, without your intellect being in the least disturbed. In fact, this earth, that trembles at the opening of the sixth seal, is the appearance of the earth perceived by the extatic ; the darkened Sun is the hiding of divine Love ; the Moon turned to blood is Faith become corrupted.

MYSELF.—Yes, truly, the moon that reflects light without heat is a good emblem of faith, which, considered by itself, has no heat. But I do not see why blood should express its perversion.

THE OFFICER.—The blood is divine truth, and, in an opposite sense, this truth perverted. When Christ says, Drink, this is my blood ; does not that signify, This is my truth ? The blood figures the truth in man ; the flesh, good ; therefore Christ says also that a man must eat His flesh and drink His blood—that means, appropriate to himself the love and wisdom emanating from Him. Joel says, when speaking of a circumstance similar to that painted by St John : The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the terrible day of Jehovah comes. Does not that signify that, before the last great day, Love and Truth will be withdrawn from the world ? And did it not so happen to the Jewish Church, whose doom Joel saw executed in prophetic vision ? Why, then, should not the like happen to the Church of which St John saw the birth, and, prophetically, the last agony ? Similar events, as we have already said many times, are always expressed by similar images.

EUGENE.—Pardon me, but the subject seems growing a little confused. It is not surprising, however ; for who can measure a cloud with the same exactitude as the solid earth ? Remember you said, first, that all St John's visions had reference to the spiritual world ; and now you say those events are but the shadow of those which are coming on the world. Is there a double key of interpretation, then, for the Mystery ?

THE OFFICER.—Not at all ; only one. The extatic is transported into the world of spirits. This world ranks in the highest, ours in the lowest degree. Well, is it not natural that whatever has its Existence in the lowest, should have its Reason in the highest ? In other words, must not an effect exist anteriorly in its cause, and a cause, to become reality, pass into effect ? The extatics, therefore, have seen in their origin or causes all the effects which have been, or will be, visible on earth. This is the simple explanation.

The judgments exercised on the Jewish Church were seen from the beginning of time, in their spiritual causes, by the prophets under the old law ; and the judgment which puts an end to the Church which took its place, assumed a distinct form, in its cause, to the eyes of the well-beloved apostle. Thus, there are two manifestations of the Church, because there are two worlds ; but one key is sufficient for both.

EUGENE.—Perhaps so. However, you have strayed away from the first subject, the earthquake that precedes the opening of the sixth seal. If there be a material earth, there must be a corresponding spiritual earth for the extatic. And doubtless it was an earthquake in the latter that St John beheld.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely ; and as this spiritual earth figures the Church—for it is through the Church alone, that is, through the Good and True, that the earth becomes of any value before God—these earthquakes symbolise revolutions within the Church.

In Holy Scripture, this meaning is invariably given to them. Listen to Isaiah : I will shake the heaven, and the earth shall be removed out of her place. Again : The foundations of the earth are shaken, because her falsehood lies heavy upon her. The last clause of the sentence clearly explains the first. A moral fault must produce a moral overthrow. Christ himself, announcing as future what St John sees as present, says that in the time of the final judgment there shall be earthquakes in divers places.

MYSELF.—But why limit the figure to the last judgment ? Do we not every day say that society is shaken, that the political equilibrium is broken up ? A thousand phrases of this kind prove that these earthquakes signify the catastrophes of the Church, seen representatively under an outward appearance by the extatic. Thus is it with the darkened sun, and the moon like blood. These bodies never have that appearance except in visions. I remember the ancients represented them always so in their magical invocations. The stars which fall represent divine truths that are lost. St John compares them to untimely figs, shaken from the tree by the wind. This, of course, is only a figure ; one must not criticise a mere comparison.

THE OFFICER.—But to a prophet all figures must have a true correspondence ; they must be veritable emblems. Thus the figure three signifies the natural good in man, which, however, is so feeble unless united to the spiritual, which is the life, that the least wind makes it fall before reaching maturity. This wind is human reason : that is quite evident.

EUGENE.—Yes, truly ; and we say of a man who reasons ill that his words are but idle breath. However, we shall return to this emblem, which plays an important part afterwards.

THE OFFICER.—The heaven shall be rolled up as a scroll.

Here, too, is an apt comparison. The books of the ancients were written upon skins, which rolled up; and heaven, that is to say, the love and wisdom of God, will be withdrawn from the wicked as the writing of a rolled-up book, in which nothing can be read. You see there is a striking analogy here between the book of Destiny and Heaven seen by the extatics as a book.

The extatic beheld the future as a scroll, peopled with animals of all sorts. The astrologer comes after him, and sees the future in the great book of heaven, peopled all with animal forms revealed by extasis. Poetry, too, has consecrated the expression :—I shall *unfold* the future to you. No philosopher, however, has yet discovered the true connexion between the constellations and what passes on earth; yet I dare affirm, that if one of them were but to study the celestial vault as a hieroglyphic of the heaven of the extatics, he would find out the true reason of every emblem. Even now, many things must strike us. The Lamb and the Dragon are there; the Virgin and the Lion occupy places equally emblematical. We have the balance, the horse, the arrow, the altar, the cup, the hood, the crown, and a crowd of other emblems. In short, in studying the primitive constellations, we can recognise all the symbols of the earliest revelation. That revelation presented the Mediator to man under the image of a shepherd leading his flock. Well; the Persian sphere shows us at the pole itself a shepherd with his flock. The constellation has since been called Cepheus. A King has taken the place of the shepherd; but a King is still the emblem of truth. Virgil proves the existence of this antique tradition by the words, *Polus dum sidera pascet*—Whilst the pole leads the stars to the pasture.

Near the virgin, which some have called Eve, is found the serpent. The Persian sphere represents there a serpent twined round a tree, with the inscription, *Coluber arborem ascendens*. The cabalists called this sign Adam; its name, they said, was *Adam Kadmon, the first man*; from which the Greeks took occasion to figure in this constellation Cadmus and his serpent. These two autumnal constellations mark the approach of darkness on the sphere, and are the emblems of the two Beings that introduced moral evil into the world. See, too, how this spirit of allusion presides over the whole drama of the Redemption. I need not speak of the Lamb, which is too striking to be cavilled at; but observe the time at which Christ was born, and his predecessor John the Baptist. St John's conception took place on the 24th September, his birth on the 24th of June; that of Christ on the 25th of March, his birth on the 25th of December. Observe the two solstices and the two equinoxes fixed here in the most decided manner! The sun of one year replacing that which preceded it. One

luminary heralding and announcing another, as each day heralds the one that follows. Thus the Precursor says of Christ, He shall increase, but I must decrease. Add to that the locality of the scene; *Bethlehem*, which signifies *the town of light*; and altogether you will find a speaking picture of moral Truth, the only light, as St John says, that lightens every man coming into the world.

EUGENE.—Into what a world these emblems lead us! And all as indisputable as new. However, if we rest as long upon each word of the Apocalypse, a year will scarcely suffice to get through it.

THE OFFICER.—Now that you know my theory, and the meaning of the principal emblems, we shall proceed much faster through what remains.

The scroll is an exact type of the moral heaven, which remains rolled up for the carnal mind, allowing none of its sublime marvels to be visible. Then, we are told, the wicked call upon the mountains and the rocks to cover them. Is not that realised every day, when the wicked man calls upon his pride, characterised by the mountain, and his human reason, signified by the rocks, to hide from him the truth which makes his torment? Goodness and truth are his accusers; and as certain insects try to hide themselves in their own foam, so he calls upon his passions to conceal him with their vileness. To such minds truth is the highest torment; and they say to their vices: Shield us, hide us, cover us from its influence. Thus the unregenerate speak on earth, and thus St John heard them speak in the other world.

EUGENE.—We have left the astronomical for the moral world, I see; but, truly, nothing can be more palpable than the vigorous hatred of vice for virtue. It cannot sustain her presence, and will wallow in the mire sooner than expose itself to her influence. These shadowy forms of St John have natures like our own, and the key to them is to be found in the human heart itself. There are but a few words more to be said upon the emblems mountain and rock.

THE OFFICER.—Mountains and rocks, by their elevation, signify heaven and the Church. Lift up your eyes, says the Psalmist, to the mountains, whence cometh your help. It was upon Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary that were represented the two most memorable scenes of the Old and New Testaments. Jerusalem, in Holy Scripture, is often called the Holy Mountain. In the opposite sense—that is to say, when allusion is made to evil and falsehood—mountains signify love of self and the world—the sole source of all evil in man. The mountains and hills, saith Isaiah, speaking of the last day, shall be abased; and again, speaking as Jehovah, he exclaims: I will lay waste the mountains and hills. By the caves are evidently meant

the obscure retreats of guilty passions. These hide in the dark recesses of the heart. Isaiah says again : When Jehovah arises to spread terror, they will hide themselves in the caves and the clefts of the rocks. These are not natural caverns ; the prophet Obadiah removes all doubt on this subject. The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, he says, thou that hidest in the holes of the mountains. We must not take the words literally, for pride assuredly does not seek such retreats ; but if rocks in the primitive sense signify faith, then, in the opposite sense, they symbolise falsehood. When Peter believes, Christ names him a rock ; when the same apostle wavers, weak in faith, Christ says : Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art a stone of offence unto me. You see, consequently, that nothing is arbitrary in the explanation. As to St John's peculiar phrase, it is found verbatim in Hosea : Then, says the prophet, they will say to the mountains, Cover us ; and to the rocks, Fall on us ; and St Luke, describing the consummation of the Church, says : Then they will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us.

MYSELF.—I am persuaded now that nothing is in the Apocalypse but what may be found in all other parts of Scripture. It seems the key of the entire, and is placed at the end of the volume with this intention. The Holy Spirit says to man : Here is a seal ; break it, and the whole interior shall be made clear to you. The Apocalypse closes the Bible like the stones placed by the ancients upon their cisterns.

THE OFFICER.—Thus, too, a stone covering the water of a well serves as an emblem of false human wisdom, obstructing our view of clear revealed truth ; but if the stone is placed by God, it becomes the figure of superior wisdom covering for a while the full truth from man, in the fear that he is not yet fitted to receive it in its completeness.

EUGENE.—So, in fact, emblematical language agrees with the proverb : Truth lies at the bottom of a well. The seventh chapter is, indeed, a well to me. Let us try, please, and lift the stone. I see, first, a judgment pronounced upon the twelve tribes of Israel, who typify, no doubt, all Good and all Truth within the Church. Next, I behold a great multitude robed in white ; these are the dwellers in heaven, whom the Lamb, their shepherd, guides to the fountains of living waters—that is to say, to living vital truth. In a word, it is a scene in heaven, if I am not mistaken.

THE OFFICER.—The true signification of the well has yet to come. Nevertheless, your summary is just. You see 12,000 specified of every tribe, making in all 144,000, which signifies the universality of Good and Truth, expressed by the solidity of a square number. If any explanations are necessary here, it can be only for a few details. Let us try and extract the

entire meaning. St John sees four angels at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow on the earth, nor the sea, nor on any tree. This strange verse explains itself, if we look upon it as a picture of the judgment. The one who pronounces it is the Lord, from whom proceeds all influence. This influence, of which man is the receptacle, made itself felt by the wicked, who said to the mountains: Fall on us; but the Lord suspends or moderates this influence when judging or receiving the good. This is the wind spoken of, for by it is signified the influence. To us, as well as to the extatic, it seems to proceed immediately from the Lord, but in reality it proceeds from the receptacle. The good, who have God in them, find his influence naturally pervading their lives; therefore this holy influence, which acts so differently on the wicked, seems to them as gentle and moderate as if God had almost quite suspended its power.

EUGENE.—This first verse has always seemed to me the most difficult of all. Your interpretation is founded upon the most intimate knowledge of the manner in which God acts upon his creatures. Now, as he acts in the same manner in heaven as on earth, I can readily believe that when the good succeed the wicked on the scene, the Divine influence seems suspended; for each lives, as it were, his natural life. To them there is a natural influence of peace and love, whereas to the wicked all was trouble and convulsion.

The four parts of the earth mean, no doubt, the whole spirit world; the four angels all heaven that descends upon the scene. But let us see now if, throughout Scripture, the word *wind* is synonymous with influence, as you understand it here.

THE OFFICER.—Before citing Scripture, permit me to draw your attention to an expression of Bossuet's. We must not, he says, be carried away by every wind of doctrine. The metaphor here explains the term; and we may remark, in passing, that the language which moves and excites, the comparisons that charm, have their origin in that spiritual world which surrounds us and influences us without our knowledge.

To know if a poetical expression is just, test it by our symbolic system. If the metaphor agrees with it, you may be sure of its exactitude. Observe how we receive, without difficulty, those expressions where the poets invoke the life-giving orb which dawns in the heart of man. See what immense use they make of this metaphysical light, which is truth in its essence, and which they substitute for it in their language; and how, if they want to paint the glow of love, they adopt all the attributes of the spiritual sun, which in its essence is love itself.

MYSELF.—Thus the rules which regulate the really beauti-

ful and true in art are not the mere result of an arbitrary and variable taste. In fact, it is the theory of the beautiful that we are now studying; for if the poetical in art is founded upon human nature, it is only by a perfect knowledge of this nature, seen in its primitive type, that we can be guided to the absolutely true and beautiful. Some time or other, perhaps, I shall develop this idea, the results of which are immense. See how far we have been led! The Apocalypse has guided us to the real origin of figurative language, and given us an absolute rule to judge of it. The beautiful and the absolute deduced from the Apocalypse!—who would have thought it?

THE OFFICER.—The Scripture is full of real poetry, because it is drawn from this source. Zeehariah saw four chariots, to which were attached four horses, and these, he says, are the four winds of heaven. The spirit bloweth where it listeth, says the Gospel. The Psalmist declares that Jehovah makes the winds his ministers; and elsewhere, that Jehovah is borne upon the wings of the wind. The breath, the wind, is so marked an emblem of Divine influence, that it is said in Genesis: God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of lives. Observe "lives" in the *plural*, to signify the will and the understanding. When Christ gave the Holy Spirit to his disciples, you remember, he breathed on them. But when this emblem is applied to the wicked, you have seen that its results are fear and terror. Thus Job says: Those who do iniquity perish by the breath of God, by the blast of his nostrils.

EUGENE.—Twice you have mentioned the word nostrils. What relation have they to this Divine or prophetic wind?

THE OFFICER.—It is by these organs that man inspires and expires the pulmonary breath; they are, therefore, a fitting emblem for the reception of the Spirit, or of the Divine breath. This signification has even passed into common language, confirming my theory that primitive language, as well as all science, owes its original form to the communications of extatics.

The Divine breath, which the wicked cannot support, led the ancients to say that the voice of Jehovah was in the storm, that he appeared in the midst of the whirlwind. If men had lived in the good and the true, the Divine influence would have seemed to them a calm, as it does to the extatic. Remember how Christ reassured his disciples in the boat, when he commanded the wind as a master, and said to the sea: Be calm.

EUGENE.—What a number of things one word has suggested! This wind of the Apocalypse, that blew neither on the earth, nor the sea, nor on the trees, symbolises the Divine influence as if suspended over all immaterial nature. Another angel ascends from the east—the spiritual east so often cited

by the prophets. This angel cries to the four others, who had received power to strike the earth and sea with plagues, not to hurt them until the elect of God were marked. The number marked amounts to one hundred and forty-four thousand, twelve thousand of each tribe. The wicked being dispersed, the good, figured by the Israelitish Church, are spared for heaven. I should like to know, however, why God charges his angels to strike man with plagues, and I should like also to ascertain the signification of each tribe.

THE OFFICER.—God never strikes ; it is man who strikes himself, and then attributes his suffering to Divine anger. This is seen from our explanation of the mountains and rocks which the wicked invoke to cover them from the beneficent Divine influence, which yet, as being tormenting to them, seems an expression of the vengeance of the Omnipotent. The virtue which descends from high as a gentle friend to soothe the innocent soul, appears but as an irritated judge and severe witness to the man who is plunged in vices.

The signification of the twelve tribes of Israel is as follows :—The tribe of Judah typifies the celestial love of Christ. Amongst the Jews, the twelve tribes having been separated into two kingdoms, that of Israel, and that of Judah, royalty remained in the latter, from whence Christ sprung. In Genesis it is said : Judah, thy brothers shall praise thee ; and Joel says of Judah, that he shall be established for eternity. Reuben signifies the wisdom proceeding from celestial love. This word is often taken as the synonyme of intelligence ; it means, in effect, *sight*. Now, spiritual sight is science and wisdom. Reuben is the first-born of Jacob, as wisdom is the child of love. This character is shewn when he exhorts his brothers not to kill Joseph. His tribe encamped at the south, and the south signifies Divine light in all its splendour. The book of Judges says : The divisions of Reuben are the searchings of a great heart. He was cursed by his father as an emblem of Faith separated from Charity, and lost his birthright thereby.

The tribe of Gad signifies the uses of life ; that is to say, the third thing after love and wisdom. In our theory of degrees it means works. The word "Gad," in fact, signifies crowd or heap. The tribes of Israel, as representatives of Divine things, were disposed three by three in four classes ; an order observed strictly in their encampments. After the three belonging to the first class, which signify love, wisdom, and works, we see the three into which the second class is divided appear, and they also signify love, wisdom, and works, but with different modifications. Thus, the tribe of Asher means the love of works, and in blessing him, his father says : As for Asher, his bread shall be abundant. His name means beatitude. The tribe of Naphtali signifies the perception of work,

or of duty. Thus, in the book of Judges it is said : Naphtali is in the heights of the field ; that is to designate intellectual perception. The tribe of Manasseh expresses the action of works, or the fulfilment of duty ; it is the natural close of the series.

The six remaining tribes are again divided into two classes of three each. In the six first we have those who form the celestial kingdom of the Lord ; in the six following, those who form the spiritual kingdom.

EUGENE.—Thus heaven is divided into two kingdoms, according to the pre-eminence of love or wisdom. This is quite comprehensible. Those who have most love are in the celestial kingdom, those who have most wisdom are in the spiritual ; and these two kingdoms are divided into three heavens each. Everywhere we still find a repetition of the Good and True, divided into End, Cause, and Effect.

THE OFFICER.—The tribe of Simeon commences the first series of the spiritual kingdom, and signifies the spiritual love of good. The name comes from the verb to listen, and marks the action of comprehending and obeying. The ear, with the extatics, is the organ of obedience, and was well known as the emblem of such among the ancients. From thence arose the custom of wearing ornaments in the ear, especially amongst women, as it marked the particular duty they are called on to exhibit—that of *obedience*.

The tribe of Levi designates the love of truth. Therefore the sacerdotal order was taken from this tribe, and the priests of the Jewish people called Levites. The sons of Levi, says the book of Deuteronomy, are chosen by Jehovah to be his ministers ; and elsewhere it testifies of them : They keep your word, they teach your judgments to Jacob, and your laws to Israel. The rod of Levi, upon which was written the name of Aaron, was loaded with almonds, and this fruit is the emblem of affection for truth.

Lastly, the tribe of Issachar, terminating the first series of the spiritual kingdom, signifies the good of life. The name of Issachar means *recompence*. In an opposite sense it signifies good done with a view to reward, which is reproof of God, and reproof also by Jacob in the words he addressed to Issachar when giving his dying benediction to his children.

The tribe of Zebulun denotes the conjugal union, or, in exact terms, the marriage of the good and true. The name means, in fact, cohabitation, or the fruit of love.

The tribe of Joseph signifies the doctrine of the good and true. Joseph in Egypt denotes the spiritual kingdom of the Lord. This is why he was established lord over it.

The tribe of Benjamin is the life of truth proceeding from the good. Thus his father calls him the son of his right hand. We must observe, further, that in many other places where

the tribes are named in Holy Scripture, the order is changed ; but invariably they are mentioned three by three—symbolising the End, the Cause, and the Effect ; so that the signification of the two last is given in that of the first.

MYSELF.—Your enumeration of the tribes is more enrious than useful, unless it leads us to discover a concordance between their order and that of the material heaven. You object to Dupuis for trying to discover the twelve patriarchs in the twelve zodiacal constellations ; because, you say, the order of the signs is invariable, while that of the tribes frequently changes. It depends, in fact, on the position of the extatic in heaven. If turned towards the east, he commences his enumeration by the tribe situated in that point of the immaterial heaven. If turned towards the west, the order is reversed in his eyes ; and so with the south and north. Yet I believe a striking analogy might be traced between the signs and the tribes, if we knew the exact way in which they were arranged by the extatics at the epoch when the sphere was invented. Dupuis mistook the epoch, that is all. But it is certain that the zodiac presents the constellations three by three, each series representing a season.

THE OFFICER.—It is true also that the zodiac is divided into two sections, like the immaterial heaven. Six tribes represent the celestial kingdom, and six signs the empire of heat, which carries light along with it. Six other tribes represent the spiritual kingdom ; but here we cannot find six signs referring to the mere production of physical light, for that diminishes in our hemisphere along with heat. We must not take the sphere, therefore, any more than fable, for a perfect image of the ideas furnished by primitive revelation ; both present striking analogies, but also evident discrepancies. The general framework is exact, but it would be vain to look for complete resemblance in the details. Analogy is a thread which breaks at every step in the labyrinth—an edifice whose ruins lie dispersed on every side. Our work is to seek for what is beyond dispute in the relation of the different parts ; but we should only be weaving specious theories did we attempt to bring every half-effaced indistinct notion into a constant and exact sequence. Nevertheless, I believe, with you, that if we had the epoch ascertained of the invention of the signs of the zodiac, an exact concordance would be found between it and the enumeration of the twelve tribes.

From what we have said, it results that the twelve tribes signify here the aggregate of all good and all truth presented before the extatic St John in heaven, under a figure similar to that in which they appeared in the books of Moses—the spirits of the two prophets evidently being similar.

EUGENE.—Already our chapter is nearly finished. After the

twelve tribes—the type of the Church—St John perceives a great multitude of spirits clothed in white robes; and the Apostle learns from one of the four animals that these are they who have passed through great tribulation, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb: he ought to have said, red-dened them. The answer of this mysterious animal does not seem to me satisfactory.

THE OFFICER.—After having designated the Church, chosen by the Creator as the depository and preserver of His Word, St John would naturally see the great Community of the just gathered from all the earth, who, without making part of the grand representative body of the elect, the doers of the Divine will, yet had known and practised it through regeneration, or, if you prefer it, tribulation. Having seen the head, ought we not afterwards to behold the several parts? For, in truth, is there not in the world, outside the pale of the Christian Church, an innumerable multitude of good men who have washed away the stain of original sin in the truths of innocence? These are they whose robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb. This expression is very characteristic of an extatic. The blood that washes is pure truth, of which white is the dazzling symbol; and therefore white, the exterior sign, struck his sight, while his language unconsciously expressed the thing itself.

MYSELF.—That is grand. I like to see the principle of tolerance which I profess, set forth by St John. The heathen saved when they are regenerated; that is a doctrine perfectly conformable to justice, morality, and philosophy. But as the Apocalypse is not always as clear as moral instinct, oblige me by proving it from the text itself. We should neither believe the probable nor the strange too readily.

THE OFFICER.—Nothing easier than the proof. The text says that this multitude was formed of all nations and all tongues, the emblematic signification of which words can only mean the entire heathen. The nations, in Scripture language, are the Gentiles, the people outside the pale of the Church. The tongues signify doctrines. Now, as there is but one true doctrine, and one language, that of truth, it is clear that the other tongues must be doctrines foreign to the Church, but in which a man can be saved through regeneration. This was indicated in primitive revelation; and from the beginning, all regenerated pagans have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb himself.

In the concluding lines, it is said that this multitude shall never more hunger nor thirst. Those words have reference to spiritual food. Hunger is applied to good, thirst to truth; therefore, never more to feel either, means, that they enjoy for evermore the plenitude of goodness and truth.

The sun likewise shall not trouble them, nor any heat. The sun being the symbol of celestial love, is also, in an opposite sense, the symbol of evil. The heat is that of falsehood, the burning blast of a perverted understanding. The material sun being the dispenser of earthly life, was chosen by the ancients as the symbol of love of self and the world. Job congratulates himself before God that he had never rejoiced too much in the heat and the light of the sun. This expression is a strong proof confirmatory of the sense we have given.

Isaiah says also: Go forth to them that are in darkness. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them. The same expressions, you see, the same images, through Scripture, denote always the same impressions. What Isaiah beheld at one given epoch in the spiritual world, St John beheld at another. A perpetual identity prevails among the beings of that world, as well as amongst those of earth. The types remain ever the same. The manners, customs, physiognomies of nations may vary, but good and evil, false and true, have ever the same characteristics. Always does good meet its opposite in evil; truth its opposite in error. Always do the regenerate find their hunger and thirst appeased, and their souls freed from the heat of passion and the suffocating breath of a depraved will. But this is almost a sermon. I am out of breath, and must defer till to-morrow the explanation of the opening of the seventh seal; that is to say, the judgment executed upon those of the Church who believe only, without bringing forth good fruit.

CHAPTER VII.

Rev., chaps. viii. ix.

THE DEAD FRUITS OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

MYSELF.—Well, my friends, let us continue our journey. I have been toiling all the night in regions inaccessible to my understanding. I come here to seek a guide.

Just imagine, I was trying to explain the eighth chapter all by myself, but I had soon to give it up.

The two preceding chapters shewed us the judgment exercised on the wicked, after which we beheld the just ascending to heaven. Now, one would think the spiritual world was swept quite clear by this process; who are these, then, that pass across the scene? Not the wicked, for they are hidden in their mountains; not the good, for we left them before the throne of God, serving him day and night in his temple. Does the present scene, then, pass on earth?

THE OFFICER.—Your imagination plays you tricks, and always carries you too high or too low. If St John had written an allegory, we should have had a poem wrought out with art and method; but he has not meant this. He has written a vision, in which we are not to look for a regular and progressive duration. The past, the present, and the future, come by turns before his mind. To demand a method from him, is to demand that he should write contrary to the nature of visions, even supposing they are subject to any laws.

MYSELF.—Boileau, speaking of the ode in composition, says: In it a grand disorder is the effect of art. So it is with the vision, I suppose. If disorder is its character, I retract. We are in the land of marvels, and I can comprehend St John doing by instinct what our poets effect by artifice. We are dealing with natures different from our own, and must take them as they are.

THE OFFICER.—Here is the order, then, of this great drama. From the beginning of the eighth chapter, it is divided into three principal parts. The first concerns those who are in the

Spiritual kingdom, and in the opposite, or Satanic kingdom ; that is to say, those who are in the true faith, and in the opposite or false faith confirmed by an evil life.

The second concerns those of the Celestial kingdom, and its opposite, the Diabolic ; or, in other terms, the dwellers in pure love, and in perverted love.

To the first division belong the False and the True, or the things of the Understanding ; to the second, Good and Evil, or the things appertaining to Love.

The third division contains the description of the judgment pronounced upon these two orders of persons, and the establishment of the New Jerusalem.

EUGENE.—Your explanation gives a character of probability to the drama, at least a character of order that makes it somewhat comprehensible already, and excites one's interest.

THE OFFICER.—At the aspect of the Divine influence, the wicked hid themselves in the dark folds of their own evil passions, and became invisible to the Apostle ; but, though hidden, they are not annihilated ; the sensations they experience torment, but do not destroy them. The good, on receiving the same influence, are united to God ; but nothing is said to induce us to believe that they will never appear more. In fact, the extatic says, in the 15th verse, They are before the throne of God ; and at the end of the same verse, as well as in the two following, he speaks of them in the future, saying, that God shall dwell with them ; that they shall neither hunger nor thirst ; that the Lamb shall be their Shepherd, and guide them to living waters, and dry the tears from their eyes. This so evidently refers to the future, that the same images are reproduced in the concluding chapters. The verses we have now to study represent the manner in which the Divine influence is manifested amongst those who receive religion solely through the understanding. All heaven appears to the extatic figured by seven angels having seven trumpets, the emblem of convocation ; but first, his state of surprise on the opening of the seventh seal is expressed by saying there was silence for half an hour. Time exists only in the material world ; therefore the metaphor is merely employed to express surprise, expectation ; we become mute from astonishment. The figure is perfectly natural.

Amongst the Jews, trumpets were used to convoke the nation. In the book of Numbers, we find Jehovah ordering Moses to make trumpets of silver for gathering the people, and sounding on feast days. Alluding to this, Joel says, speaking of the final judgment : Sound the trumpet in Zion, for the coming of the day of Jehovah. The Lord Jehovah, says Zeehariah, shall sound the trumpet. To the visionary the sound of this instrument typifies the Divine revelation

manifested in the heart of man. Sounds, cries, voices, like speech, are always manifestations of thought.

EUGENE.—In fact, agreeable feelings are always represented by gentle sounds, and disagreeable by the reverse. There is a certain harmony subsisting between all our senses; if one is absent, man strives to represent the impression he ought to receive from it by an analogy borrowed from another sense. Thus a blind man described his impression of the colour of scarlet by saying that it was like the sound of a trumpet. And so, having no earthly organ for spiritual things, we are obliged to express them by a material figure, to which the spiritual sensation bears an analogy.

THE OFFICER.—You find philosophy where St John has only given vent to impressions. After this preparatory scene, another angel appears, with a golden censer, and flings the incense upward to the altar. You know that incense signifies spiritual love. We have ascertained that already.

MYSELF.—In short, these vapour clouds inhaled by the organ of smell correspond to mental perception. Thus all is arranged for placing on the altar—that is to say, for employing in worship—true spiritual feelings. Those men who are in the faith will inhale their perfume with delight. It is all they ask.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely the reverse. Their faith being separated from love, is not acceptable in the sight of God, and true spiritual worship is as great a torment to them, as the Divine influence was to the wicked, who went to hide themselves in the clefts of the rocks from it. Thus, you see, that as soon as the angel flung his golden censer on the earth, these spirits, tormented by an influence which was not in harmony with their ideas, made the air resound with voices and thunderings, and the spiritual earth trembled.

EUGENE.—Nothing can be more just. It is still the working out of the same theory. Opposites acting on each other always produce collision. I can readily imagine these voices and thunderings to symbolise doctrines overthrown, and reasonings controverted. It is a most ingenious idea to manifest the false by the mere presence of the true. However, before going into detail on the plagues that follow, let us pause a little to consider these first emblems. The golden censer, containing the incense, is used here for the incense itself. That is quite simple. The vessel containing substituted for the thing contained. All languages admit that figure. In ordinary speech, we talk of heaven to designate God, who dwells therein.

Thus, the censer may be one of the attributes of spiritual worship; but there are no real censers in heaven. The extatics see them only as correspondents of the object which these instruments express. The incense, it is said, means the prayers of the saints. How are we to understand that?

THE OFFICER.—You have explained it yourself. These perfumes are emblematical, signifying the prayers of the spirits in the spiritual kingdom; and it is well that these holy breathings of saintly souls should be communicated to the hardened hearts of those who merely understand without loving. Opposites manifest each other. The censor, by itself, could have produced nothing; then what more fitting for it to contain than the perfumes of virtue and innocence?

MYSELF.—Even our poetry adopts this charming language. Do we not speak of praise as incense offered to virtue or genius? Do we not say of one too proud of the eulogies bestowed on him, that he is intoxicated with the incense of flattery? In fact, no emblem could more fitly express the prayers and homage of saints ascending to heaven. I did not expect so much poetry in the Apocalypse.

THE OFFICER.—David employs the same metaphor: Let my prayers be like the incense that ascends to thee; and Scripture frequently speaks of Jehovah breathing the odour of rest. You will observe, that rest being a state of the soul, cannot be manifested by a sensible odour; but the extatic expresses himself thus without diffidence.

EUGENE.—Well; do we not say every day that such a place exhales an odour of virtue? or, when we enter the house of a pious man, that he seems to breathe an odour of peace? What true poetry! And there is another phrase that strikes me as very beautiful: The angel takes the censor, and lights the incense with fire from the altar. Is not that saying that we must light the torch of truth at the fire of Divine love?

THE OFFICER.—Your conjecture is quite true. We see in Leviticus that the two sons of Aaron were consumed by fire from heaven, for having kindled the incense with strange fire, in place of that from the altar of the holocaust. Let us now see the effect produced by these things upon the souls whose religion is the barren worship of the understanding. Celestial gifts turn into plagues for them; and it cannot be otherwise. First, says the Apocalypse, there fell a hail, and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up.

Does not this hail figure forth the Divine dew or water, the emblem of truth, changed into hail by the cold heart that receives it? Blood, as we have already seen, is Divine truth; and, here in an opposite sense, truth falsified. The third part of trees, that is, of perceptions, was burned up by the evil feelings of these spirits. Observe that everything here, having reference to a perverted understanding, is represented by the number three; this number, as we have seen, being the symbol of truth, and, in an opposite sense, of falsehood. Now the third part is the same thing as the number three.

MYSELF.—I do not like interrupting you so often, but the Apocalypse is of such a nature, that when I seize the entire, the details escape me, and when I pause upon details, the general scope vanishes from my view. I must, therefore, consider them alternately. Pray, then, rest a moment upon these symbols of hail and trees, which have not come under our notice before. I can well imagine how all that was beautiful and harmonious in the first part of the drama becomes discordant in the second, for everything derives its quality from the recipient. The most exquisite form from God's hand becomes hideous when it descends into the evil principle.

THE OFFICER.—Well, according to that, the hail that destroys the harvest is the exact representation of the false destroying the true and good. David says, He gave them hailstones for rain—that is to say, the rain changed into hailstones when it fell upon them. Nothing can be more simple. The hail, says Isaiah, shall overthrow the refuge of liars. Do you not see there clearly the symbol of falsehood?

Ezekiel, speaking of those who strive to establish false doctrine, says: Tell those who raise this wall, that it shall crumble away, for an abundant rain shall fall, and hailstones upon every part. See here how the rain is changed to hail, and the epithet *stones* added—a symbol with which we are now familiar, and which, while it refers to truth, also serves to qualify the error to which truth is opposed.

The tree is everywhere in Scripture the most ordinary hieroglyphic of man, and human perceptions have been from all antiquity figured by trees. Ordinary language expresses, without the metaphor ever being cavilled at, that a man's mind is cultivated, as if it were a garden filled with trees. The results of our thoughts and feelings are compared universally to good and bad fruit. In Ezekiel, Jehovah speaks thus: I humble the lofty tree, and raise the lowly. Is it not thus he acts with man? The Psalmist exclaims: All ye fruit-trees praise the Lord; and elsewhere: The trees of Jehovah are satisfied. Every tree, saith Christ, that does not bear good fruit, shall be cut down and thrown into the fire; and it is with reference to this resemblance between man and trees, that, according to Leviticus, every tree used for the service of man throughout the land of Canaan was circumcised.

MYSELF.—What a singular custom! Did the ancients, then, understand the division of plants into sexes? I cannot comprehend this almost carnal relation between the man and the vegetable. True, our magnetisers exert their influence upon trees; but I need not trouble my head with all this. Enough if I see clearly that the false perceptions of these spirits, whose religion was of the understanding only, were destroyed.

The text adds: And all green grass was burned up. Probably, from the colour given here to grass, it means vital faith, which yet perishes without celestial love. Grass, like the tree, has an emblematical signification easy to discover. A desert without verdure is the natural hieroglyphic for a heart without affection.

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah says: All flesh is grass; and elsewhere he describes man as the herb of the field. In another passage, Jehovah says: I shall extend my blessing upon your children; they shall flourish as the green herb.

EUGENE.—Details, indeed, are superfluous here; for every book borrows emblems from the vegetable kingdom to express human passions: these emblems become real to the eye of the extatic; that is the sole difference:

In support of our theory, there is a passage also in the Gospel. You remember, where Christ is healing the blind man: before the cure was quite effected, that is, before the natural sight was developed, the spiritual sight was opened by the touch of the Man-God, and he exclaimed, I see trees like men. Then the two trees in the garden of Eden, did they not figure the twofold life of man, that of the understanding, and that of love? Besides, men grow in wisdom and love by an operation analogous to the phenomena of vegetation, for the tree is nourished by gases composed of the elements of water and light; and are not these the two emblems of truth?

MYSELF.—How many emblems, also, are furnished by the different parts of a plant! The wood, the root, the leaf, are everywhere consecrated in the songs of our poets. Then what a charming symbolical language we owe to flowers; our hopes the blossom, our actions the fruit! And is not the catalogue of symbolical trees quite endless? There is the olive, the emblem of peace; and the palm, of truth, from which the custom arose of carrying palms in religious processions, like the multitude of the redeemed which defiled before us in the preceding chapter. We had forgotten this emblem.

THE OFFICER.—When the second angel sounds his trumpet, St John sees a great mountain all on fire cast into the sea, the third part of which becomes blood. We have explained all these emblems in other places. Thus you will understand that by the mountain is meant infernal love. Love is high as a mountain, saith the proverb. And this mountain is flung into the abyss, where all falsehood is engulfed. The specification of the third part, with reference to the sea, shews its nature. It is falsehood, which, notwithstanding its pride, is engulfed and disappears in this impure mass which St John designates, with reason, a sea. This emblem is often repeated afterwards, and always with the same signification. You can imagine

what follows. Everything in this sea perishes, even the ships that sail upon it.

MYSELF.—How! Ships in the spiritual world! As for the mountain, it is a most natural emblem; the common people say of a proud man that he sets up his back. Is not that to make himself a mountain, as the frog tried to swell himself to the size of an ox?

THE OFFICER.—We have crowns, bows, swords, and a censer in heaven; for, you see, the extatic carries with him into the spiritual world the impressions he had received from the natural world. You have only to open the Bible to find that the ship is not an arbitrary emblem. The prophets designated knowledge by this sign; for, in fact, all things necessary to man's natural life are carried in ships, and knowledge is the great necessary of man's spiritual life; knowledge being figured by that which contains it, according to the common idiom of all languages, and one frequently employed in Holy Scripture. Thus the cup is used to express the liquor it holds; the plate means the food; the temple, the church; the altar, the worship. The symbol of a ship, therefore, is not more extraordinary than all these emblems. Job exclaims: My days have flown, they have seen no good; they have passed away with the ships of desire. Those who go down to the sea in ships, says the Psalmist, see the wonders of Jehovah in the depths of the abyss. This is true in two senses.

It is by reason of this signification of the word ship, that the opulent city of Tyre is taken in Scripture as the emblem of Knowledge, for ships filled her ports. You remember all that Ezekiel and Isaiah have written on this subject? And when the prophets wish to paint a Church without knowledge, they describe the desolation of Tyre. David says: You will break the vessels of Tarshish by an east wind. And the ark of Noah, with all its details, is nothing but the hieroglyphic of the ancient Church.

MYSELF.—In truth, you explain the Apocalypse admirably, and all seems so natural, that there is no room to cavil; besides, the whole of antiquity supports your opinion.

It is remarkable that the two most celebrated cities of antiquity, they who helped the world's progression most, each took a vessel for their symbol. I speak of Rome and Athens. The ship, too, figures amongst the constellations, and I do not despair of finding its signification there confirmatory of your theory. Amongst the Egyptians, it was consecrated to the worship of Isis, the goddess of the moon, the type of *faith*. All these analogies are very singular.

EUGENE.—I really believe that our examination of the Apocalypse will furnish us with all the terms necessary for a dictionary of emblems, by the aid of which we can read,

without stumbling, the Holy Scripture, mythology, hieroglyphics of all kinds, whether of granite or marble, as well as those which man has composed on the heavens with stars. How important such a research would be! In truth, I feel like a man who dreams, for I can scarcely persuade myself that we really possess the key to so much knowledge. Strange that the human race should be so heedless, and never seek to investigate these truths until now!

THE OFFICER.—The human race, my friends, does not investigate them, because it does not love them. It cares for no truths that will not bring worldly profit, and these only bring glory to God; that is the solution of the enigma. God has blinded the world, as he blinded the Jews of old, that they should not see; for the manifestation of the highest spiritual truths is not destined to take place until the execution of the last judgment. That is being accomplished now; and therefore we comprehend these holy things which would have been profaned had they been divulged a century sooner.

MYSELF.—I cannot as yet assent to your last proposition.

EUGENE.—Nor I. I give my adhesion willingly to your explanation of the Apocalyptical emblems; but if from the aggregate you draw the conclusion that the final judgment is accomplishing now, then farewell. I can no longer keep you company.

THE OFFICER.—Then you acknowledge that I have revealed some most remarkable truths in my explanations, and yet at the same time you believe that the person who reveals them to you is in error? A most inconsistent conclusion!

MYSELF.—But, my dear friends, St John, in the spirit world, saw events outside and beyond time. How, then, can you pretend to affix a date to them?

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah and Ezekiel likewise beheld events beyond time, and yet we of this age can now affix their date. Our grandchildren may do for the prophecies of St John what we have done for the prophets of the Old Testament. They will see, for example, mankind generally enlightened, they will see that Protestant and Catholic have ceased to exist as such, just as their predecessors the Pharisee and Sadducee have vanished from the scene; and in such an age, they will say that the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse has descended upon earth.

MYSELF.—Then, in fact, it is posterity that must judge if the prediction has been accomplished in our time. For us, who live in the time itself, it is difficult to judge if prophesied events are meeting their fulfilment. It is only after an event has passed, that we can judge of the relation between it and the prophecy?

THE OFFICER.—The books of Moses teach us that we can

only see God from behind—that is, after the event has passed. Contemporaries, at least those of any intellect, never judge well of events that pass immediately before them. A certain distance is necessary for them to take in all the bearings. Have you ever known a great man done justice to while living? You cavil in vain, my friends. The farther we advance, the more proofs do we acquire of this truth, that the doctrines of Protestantism and the Roman Vicgerency are judged, and that a new Church is springing up in their place, without peril to the salvation of either Roman or Reformist, many of whom no doubt have a pure love to God.

EUGENE.—Well, continue our examination. We stopped at the tenth verse of the eighth chapter, where we saw judgment executed upon those whose religion is of the understanding only. We have seen the trees, symbolic of the minor truths that men hold, consumed; we have seen their ships, the emblems of material knowledge, perish; but what signifies the star called Wormwood, which fell from heaven upon the third part of the rivers, and corrupted them in such a manner that whoever drank of the water died?

THE OFFICER.—Spiritual death is caused, in fact, by a perverted understanding of celestial things brought to bear on all the truths placed at man's disposal. The star typifies the understanding. That is a common emblem. The rivers mean truths. Here the prophet says waters, to designate truth in abundance; and adds: The fountains of waters—which indicates the Divine Word. A perverted intellect renders these waters bitter as itself. The star is named wormwood—an emblem of the bitterness of falsehood. If you require proofs of these two significations, the Bible is full of them. I will place waters in the desert that the people may drink, says Jehovah by the mouth of Isaiah. Is Jehovah wroth against the rivers? asks Habakkuk. And in the Gospel, does not Christ say: Whoso cometh to me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water? In the preceding chapter of the Apocalypse, it is said that the Lamb shall himself conduct the good to the source of living waters. Indeed we passed rapidly over this emblem, for the meaning strikes one at the first glance. As to the wormwood, I find these words in Jeremiah: I shall feed this people on wormwood. Amos exclaims: Ye have turned judgment into gall, and justice into wormwood. In Lamentations, Jeremiah says: He has filled me with bitterness; He has made me drunk with wormwood. Observe, the number three is still employed, because the emblems have reference to error.

MYSELF.—I did not exactly see from your table the absolute necessity of the sense given to the number three.

THE OFFICER.—Three signifies completeness as regards

truth ; indeed any whole is composed of three terms :—the good, the true, and the act. The good in itself, like love, is the being of a thing. It attains to existence in the true, or in wisdom ; but these two are still invisible abstractions, unless manifested in act. Action is the truth converted into works, or, in other words, manifested. This is why the number three, or unity repeated three times, was the attestation of truth. What is said of the good and true, applies equally to the bad and false. Falsehood is that which gives evil its existence, and action is the manifestation of this falsehood, which contains in itself the first term. The question here concerns perverted faith, and thus you see it is rigorously necessary to view everything in a triple series.

EUGENE.—How ! Had St John all these metaphysics in his head !

THE OFFICER.—He had sensations which, perhaps, he did not analyse. But you, who wish to have all the sensations experienced by these extatics put into words, must needs consider the subject metaphysically. Yet, if I shew you anything profound in the words of St John, you exclaim against metaphysics ; and if I shew you what seems incoherent, you say there is no meaning. Do not, pray, put your own ideas in the place of facts ; consent to see them as they are, without which you will comprehend nothing of St John's recital.

MYSELF.—You are quite right, my friend. I had been wishing for a didactic order in the Apocalyptic scenes ; and I now comprehend that, in reality, every verse is a drama complete in itself ; though, at the same time, that does not hinder the scene from being continued to the following verse ; in short, after the perusal of each separate part, everything seems finished—engulfed in the sea, or consumed by the fire ; but in the next verse, this crumbled world is rebuilt again. And, on reflection, this does not seem so strange : we find the same process in our own minds. If our thoughts convert all our ideas into images, these images pass away and rise again by turns. We must remember that all here symbolises the struggle of *ideas*. These ideas are represented by *objects*, and from thence arises the confusion to our eyes. Let us forget the object, and think only of the idea, and all will appear natural and probable. We can readily abstract our minds from these forms ; but an extatic merely sees, and writes what he sees.

THE OFFICER.—You are right ; therefore a sort of special education is needful to put our minds in the proper frame for reading the Apocalypse, as well as for understanding it when explained. This education you are going through, and after each chapter, the solution of the remainder becomes more easy. Let us finish the one we have commenced.

The fourth angel darkened the third part of the sun, the

moon, and the stars, and day and night were deprived of the third part of their light. This symbol, at least, will not embarrass you, for all the hieroglyphics are known, and easily read. The signification is, that all love, all faith, all truth vanished away. Day and night had no more light—that is to say, no more light proceeding from either love or faith. Love is signified by the day, over which the sun presides; faith by the moon, the star of night, as poets call her. Finally, the chapter finishes by the word, Woe, repeated three times, to signify the *totality* of moral falsehood in the most forcible manner. The hieroglyphic here is of the plainest kind; natural darkness is the true figure to represent spiritual darkness. You are no doubt familiar with a hundred passages in the prophets, where they paint the decline of faith in their Church under the image of the sun, moon, and stars being darkened. Man's errors, we know, cannot change the order of the physical world, therefore the stars here must signify spiritual things.

EUGENE.—Yes; we need not pause longer on the meaning of these verses, but proceed to the ninth chapter, where we find, as Bossuet remarks, stranger combatants appearing on the scene than in any other portion of St John's book. These are the locusts; and here I await your explanation with extreme interest.

The fifth angel sounds his trumpet, a star falls from heaven, the key of the bottomless pit is given to this star, and the pit is opened, when a great smoke issues forth, and locusts along with the smoke. Without proceeding farther, let us try and find the solution of these emblems, or rather of this vision, for St John cannot possibly be allegorising here—he is a true seer. Nowhere but in a vision could one see a star holding a key, a pit from which proceeds smoke, and locusts engendered of this smoke. Surely, if ever there were a dream, this must be one.

MYSELF.—Hold, my friends, this is going a little beyond our powers of credulity. I am ready enough to acknowledge the existence of a world beyond, and different from ours; but a world such as you call on us to believe in, filled with all sorts of incongruities and disorder, this I must reject.

What! I say to myself, shall order and harmony reign here below, while above exist only discord and confusion? All here attests the wisdom of God—all above seems the dream of extravagance and folly! Ah! my friends, let us leave these locusts of the Apocalypse, and return to common sense. Before I can consent to adopt such absurdities, my reason, my love of the beautiful, of order, of harmony—all must vanish. In short, I must become a fool.

THE OFFICER.—Yet, my dear friend, this is exactly what

proves the intrinsic truth of the Apocalypse. You are, indeed, with the fools of the spiritual world, for you are with the false; how, then, expect order and harmony? You are with sin and error; how, then, could you perceive truth and equity? I have told you that the other world, like ours, is pure, sublime, harmonious to the virtuous; impure, abominable, and full of confusion to the wicked. We are now traversing the lowest degree, the Capernaum of the spiritual world—the abode of the refuse of humanity; could you expect anything else there but revolting images? These locusts that disgust you, no doubt disgusted the pure soul of St John, as much as the fumes from some iniquitous den of debauch would do you or me.

Be assured he did not place them there from mere pleasure or caprice. They are, no doubt, the necessary effigy of evil, the most hideous form under which even the imagination of an extatic could represent it. You are offended with the details; St John must have been equally offended with the vices which these objects typify. Far from extinguishing my faith in the unseen world, these revolting representations confirm it.

EUGENE.—What a profound theory you have enunciated! I, too, had felt my faith wavering; but you have restored my confidence. If evil exists here, it must also exist above. Why, then, should we be surprised at a visionary clothing this evil in a palpable form? He transforms the moral feeling of repulsion into a physical sensation; and under what more hideous form could he exhibit monstrous vices, than that of these impure insects, the terror of every land where they appear, according to the testimony of all Oriental travellers? The extatics of the other world clothe their perceptions in terms borrowed from the objects that surround man; but there is nothing absolute in these emblems.

MYSELF.—True; I was silly in thus giving way to first impressions, before examining the subject. Your commentary reassures me; and I have no objection even to discuss these locusts seriously. But, first, what is meant by the star which opens the pit for these insects?

THE OFFICER.—The key signifies the power to open and shut. In the third chapter, it is said of the Lord that he has the key of David; and in St Matthew, that the Apostle Peter has the keys of the kingdom of heaven. It is, therefore, the Truth, represented by this Apostle, which saves. The same Truth is symbolised here by a star, to which the emblematic key is added. It is, in fact, Divine truth, then, which descends to the infernal abyss, designated as a pit.

EUGENE.—And as opposites act on each other, so this Divine truth makes us see the smoke rising from the abyss, filled with

revolting images of horror. The abyss is hell ; there can be no doubt of that ; but why is it figured by a pit ?

THE OFFICER.—A well or pit, which contains and conceals water, is an excellent emblem of hidden truth ; and from thence arises the old proverb, of truth being found at the bottom of a well. Do not those who confirm themselves in error banish truth as if to the bottom of a well ? In other words, do they not cover with their falsehoods the truth they dread to behold ? When the brothers of Joseph became jealous of his virtue, did they not let him down into a well ? From this well or pit, in the Apocalypse, rises a smoke as of a furnace ; this furnace being the emblem of infernal heat, and the smoke the result, or the visible expression, of the falsehood of hell.

As the incense clouds are taken for the symbol of truth, so these dense masses of heavy smoke symbolise error.

When Abraham looked on Sodom and Gomorrah, he beheld likewise a smoke hovering above these cities, like that of a furnace. Moses says of the wicked : They add without ceasing to their sins ; therefore they shall be like the smoke from an oven. And David : The wicked shall perish ; they shall be consumed as the smoke of a furnace.

MYSELF.—And do we not say, in everyday language, if a project fails, that it has ended in smoke ? Do we not talk of the fumes of passion ? When Rousseau exclaims : Adieu, Paris ! city of mud, of noise, and smoke, have not these words, so true in the physical sense, a moral signification likewise ? The mud typifies degraded souls ; the noise, vain disputes ; the smoke, perverted intellects. Such an appearance may therefore well accompany the symbolic locusts.

THE OFFICER.—Locusts signify error in its lowest degree. These insects devour grass, herbs, and plants, all of them emblems consecrated to the spiritual in the lowest degree. You shall cast seed into your fields, it is said in Deuteronomy, but the locust shall devour it. David says that Jehovah has given all the fruit of the labour of the wicked to the locust ; that is, he gives them over to errors as fatal to faith as the locust to the productions of the field. One must be a fool not to adopt this sense ; for surely none but the weakly superstitious could persist in believing there were real locusts in the spiritual world.

The extatic has associated this image with that of sensual falsehood, and very naturally. Besides, the proof that these locusts, along with the smoke and the furnace, are only spiritual images seen in succession by the visionary, and reunited afterwards into one picture, is, that these same locusts have a power similar to scorpions. The emblem changes, because the moral idea changes also. The scorpion is emblematical of incitement to error, those persuasions that produce a torpor of the reason,

and act on the mind like the stinging of a scorpion on the human frame. You remember how Christ in the gospel gives his disciples power to crush serpents and scorpions, the words evidently being used in the emblematical sense.

MYSELF.—The scorpion, indicating the second month of autumn, when all is hastening to decay in nature, may have been designed by the first authors of the celestial sphere to express this torpor of the soul.

THE OFFICER.—These locusts are strictly forbidden to hurt any vegetable production, but are given power only over those men who have not the mark of God on their foreheads. Can anything be clearer than this symbol? Providence, in fact, will not permit error to destroy what is vital in man, except in those within whose hearts there is no Divine love, that true mark of God. And observe how sublime is this allegory! Did you ever see a man in whom *love* still existed as a living principle, irretrievably led away by error? Does not the sacred instinct of virtue repulse all sophistry? Are our pious women in the least shaken by their unbelieving husbands? Does not falsehood find a ready acceptance in those souls alone where love is extinguished, and consequently faith is weak?

EUGENE.—St John leads us to a true study of the human heart. Look at those degraded and filthy souls which are plunged in sensuality; where do they find a responsive echo except among men who resemble themselves? Modesty droops her eyes before them, innocence fears them, and sincerity, if she advances to offer her hand, draws it back again with horror; for it seems to her as if she had touched that of a corpse. Some day I shall try to explain the whole of St John by a study of the human heart. The locusts are charged not to kill men, but are allowed permission to torment them during five months. By this I would understand that they were given power not to take from man intellect and love, which is his true life, but to reduce his faculties to a state of torpor, which is expressed by the number five.

THE OFFICER.—The number five signifies a state of short duration. When Christ gave his servants ten talents to trade with, you see that he reproved him who had only gained five. St John continues: In those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. In short, these men shall seek to brutalise their understanding to that degree that all spiritual life shall die within them. But God will not suffer that. He leaves them still a terrible light that torments them. In vain the degraded sensualist tries to stifle conscience, still its light shines within, and will not let him be at peace.

EUGENE.—You have displayed considerable acuteness in this interpretation; but there is another point, which has

struck me, though some might consider it a subtlety. Observe the phrase runs—Men shall *seek* death, and shall not find it ; they shall *desire* to die, but death shall fly from them. Here, in the repetition of the same idea, I find the twofold nature of man. These sensualists seek through the intellect, and desire through the affections ; you see the whole man is expressed there. What meaning in the least word of this book ! Were we to analyse it thoroughly, our task would scarcely ever be finished.

MYSELF.—Then let us proceed at least. These locusts resemble horses. They have crowns on their heads, the faces of men, the hair of women, the teeth of lions, and breastplates of iron. Their wings sound like the rushing of chariots, and they have tails like scorpions. Here the absurdity, the incoherence of the images, prevents all attempt at a literal comparison ; but in place of that making me incredulous, which I would have been had each of these emblems been offered to me as an article of faith, I become a firm believer, for I see that these emblems of horse, man, lion, woman, cuirass, and chariots, are but the sensations, mingled together, which the visionary received from the contemplation of the false ; and the result has been one of those monstrous beings which have no constant or real type either in the visible or invisible world.

THE OFFICER.—Precisely. St John saw spirits, and not locusts ; but he has given them the form of locusts, because their ideas assimilate with the functions and natures of these unclean insects, just as, in my time, an ass's head used to be put upon dunces at school.

St John has well imaged the degraded sensualist under this form. At the same time, he enumerates their qualities in detail, and each quality has a distinct emblem which exactly characterises it. Thus the love of disputation assumes, to his eyes, the form of a horse prepared for the battle ; and this signification always holds good, for the horse is the symbol of intellect. Their crowns, like gold, signify the belief of these unhappy wranglers that they have gained the victory. They pride themselves on their own fatal errors, and wear them like a crown. Alas ! how many in the world resemble them ! They have faces of men. Now a man is the hieroglyphic of wisdom ; therefore it is here signified that their forms have still the appearance of wisdom. For who does not try to give his system, however absurd, the aspect of truth ?

A woman is the symbol of affection, and hair the type of truth in the lowest degree ; therefore the hair of women represents the instinctive affection for truth which is always striving to correct error. The lion's teeth express the power which they believe they possess within themselves—the teeth

being the emblem of the power of truth in the lowest or ultimate degree. Their breastplates signify the specious arguments with which they defend themselves.

The noise of their wings is that of their reasoning; it resembles the sound of a chariot—that is to say, of a doctrine. And, lastly, the scorpion's tail indicates the torpor which has fallen upon the original faculties of their intellect.

EUGENE.—I thought to have read the Bible henceforth without your help, but I see that would not be easy. Still, your explanation is obscure in many parts; and I cannot affirm that there is nothing arbitrary in it. One should take the Bible in his hand, and go over each emblem separately. I long for positive results, for, unless one can get clear ideas on the subject, it is as well not to have any ideas at all. Now, your explanation does not strike me as at all preferable to that of Bossuet. Let us pass over the familiar emblems of horses and crowns, and discuss again the women's hair and faces of men.

THE OFFICER.—The hair we have explained already, and the emblem of a face needs no explanation. Nothing remains then to discuss but the man and the woman. In one predominates intellect; in the other love. That, at least, is clear. The chief distinction of man is understanding; that of woman affection. Man must have thoughts to occupy his mind; woman needs only feelings to fill her heart. A woman of mere intellect steps forth from her sex; a man who is only affectionate scarcely claims a place in his. The man's face, then, represents the masculine intellect of his nature—woman's hair the truths of affection in their lowest degree. The lion, you know, expresses power; but you are not clear about the signification of the teeth. Here it is—

EUGENE.—First tell me if Scripture supports your philosophical opinion of women; for in truth it has great beauty, and is founded upon experience. Hitherto, the Scripture seemed to me filled up only with studies of heaven and hell; not, certainly, with studies of the human heart.

THE OFFICER.—Yet all the secrets of our moral nature are there. Scripture is not only the history of the invisible, but also of the sensible world, expressed under the most exact symbols which reason can conceive. The Apocalypse proves that. What profound moral truths are hidden under all these emblems! The Church there is called woman, mother, daughter, wife, to denote that her primal characteristic should be affection for the truth—the principal attribute of woman's nature. The Eternal Word is delineated as the husband of this woman; because from the Lord comes all enlightenment. Woman, says Isaiah, be at peace, and hear my words.

EUGENE.—In short, a crowd of quotations could be accumu-

lated to prove that the Woman signifies the Church. But what do these lions' teeth mean in the mouths of locusts? Why, a single tooth would be larger than the whole animal. Yet how absurd to discuss symbols as if they were absolute, as if the image did not pass away from the eyes of the extatic as quickly as it was formed!

THE OFFICER.—Teeth signify the lowest degree of sensuality in the understanding. They masticate animal nourishment, which is always a type of spiritual food. Sensual men think their own intellect and reason invincible. They believe in the force of their own understanding, and their teeth, therefore, appear to the extatic powerful like those of a lion.

MYSELF.—Yes; I have often met these men who are perfectly sensual in their errors, receiving nothing but through the bodily senses, and, consequently, holding on to their own dogmas with an obstinate tenacity; mocking science, ridiculing all helief in that which they cannot see or touch, and looking on all beyond as a chimera which it would be unworthy of them to credit.

THE OFFICER.—The tenacity, then, with which their understanding clings to error is justly figured by teeth; and remember how David said of Jehovah: He shall break the teeth of the wicked. When Daniel wants to delineate impiety, he says: Then rose up from the sea a terrible beast, with teeth of iron; and the wranglings of the wicked are figured in hell by the gnashing of teeth.

Concerning the breastplate, Isaiah speaks of it as an emblem of justice; injustice may, therefore, adopt the emblem likewise, and cover herself with the breastplate of iniquity. Like these locusts of St John, injustice wears a breastplate of iron; for sensual men are as impervious to truth as if covered with iron. We talk in common language of the brazen impudence of shameless people.

The noise of their wings is like that of chariots and many horses. To fly is to perceive; the wing, then, by means of which a creature flies, signifies the reason. If the disputatious reasonings of these people are noisy, it is natural to compare them to the sound of a chariot. By a chariot is signified doctrine; the emblem of the horse is already known to you. The Psalmist often speaks of the chariots of God. In these chariots, he says, is safety. That can only be interpreted as referring to doctrine. All the prophets speak of the chariot in this sense. In Haggai we read: I shall overthrow the chariots and those that sit in them. Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Does not that symbolise forcibly the doctrine of love?

MYSELF.—And did not the Greeks represent the chariot of Apollo, the god of arts, as drawn by four horses? Neptune, the

divinity of the sea—the emblem of natural truths—was likewise borne upon a ear. Everywhere, indeed, we find chariots introduced in mythology ; and I see no difficulty in admitting that it means doctrine. People speak of the chariot of revolution to express the principles of those times. Again, when Hippolytus is flung from his chariot, and dragged along by the horses, is it not meant that the poor young man, confiding too much in his own strength and opinions, had fallen a victim thereto ? Observe, also, the accident happens to him just after the apparition of a monster rising from the sea, as in the Apocalypse. These terrible beasts of antiquity, both sacred and profane, are, I verily believe, our own indomitable passions overthrowing the chariots and the horsemen. Lastly, these locusts have the tails of scorpions. Now, the tail is the lowest degree of intellect, as the head figures the highest. They are everywhere used as emblems in what concerns the understanding. In the head lies the brain, the nerves of which are continued down the spinal chord, and terminate in the tail. Therefore, as one is, so will the other be. A foolish head will produce a wicked tail.

THE OFFICER.—Your explanation has obviated the necessity of mine. The tail of an animal, in fact, signifies the sensual principle in its lowest degree ; and you see that pagan fable always represented the inferior divinities with tails, to indicate their approximation to the animal.

EUGENE.—True ; and observe, also, that an animal most frequently expresses passion by its tail ; a dog shews pleasure by the movements of his ; the dorsal line responds to the hand that caresses ; if he is angry, the tail becomes stiff, erect, and motionless. But we are going into anatomy. Let us keep to Holy Scripture ; by that alone would I wish to prove the truth of the Apocalypse.

THE OFFICER.—Well, then, Isaiah speaks of the head and the tail of Israel : Man, in honour, he says, is the head, but the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. Therefore, in describing prophets or teachers of this nature, St John naturally furnishes them with tails, as the fitting emblem of the results produced by their sensual philosophy.

MYSELF.—Why, it has all the force of an epigram, this picture ; but tell me, why power to hurt during five months was given to them. I know the signification of five, but why not five days, or five years ?

THE OFFICER.—Days and years are formed by the course of the sun, which, being an emblem of love, has no place here. The moon gives the measure of the months, and symbolises faith. Now, the scene expressed in this chapter entirely concerns faith ; and therefore all the hieroglyphics must correspond.

EUGENE.—What singular exactitude even in the least word ! Which of us would have thought of all this, unless guided by you ? Let us proceed then to the next word, for only in that way can our explanation embrace the whole meaning.

The king of these locusts is called Abaddon in Hebrew, and in Greek Apollyon. What does that signify ?

THE OFFICER.—These two words, of which one is the translation of the other, means the extreme or lowest degree of falsehood, from whence results perdition. Thus Abaddon is called the angel of the bottomless abyss. We are here dealing with etymologies, and not with emblems, and there are more yet to come. After the locusts, St John perceives very singular horses—

MYSELF.—I engage to read all that flowingly. These horses are reasonings or arguments ; they have lions' heads, as the symbol of their power, which is, in fact, in the mouth : their serpents' tails are the image of the perfidy of their thoughts, sullied by sordid interest. Then we find the third part of men killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone from their mouths. The meaning of "the third part" is perfectly known to us, and signifies the entire as regards the false. By fire is meant infernal affections ; the smoke is pride of intellect ; and the brimstone—but there I am at fault.

THE OFFICER.—It means the lowest sensualism exhaled from both. Yellow signifies the lowest degree of truth, and, as an infernal symbol, the lowest degree of falsehood. The prophets often make use of this emblem. Ezekiel says : I will rain fire and brimstone upon you. The Psalmist likewise employs this image, which the New Testament has also consecrated. St Luke tells us that on the day Lot left Sodom there rained from heaven fire and brimstone.

MYSELF.—In fact, as evil concupiscence is represented by brimstone, it very naturally was rained down upon Sodom.

THE OFFICER.—In continuation, St Luke adds : And so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man is revealed. You see, then, clearly, that St John, who witnessed this event, could not fail to behold the symbol of brimstone, and even to employ it many times. Observe how, in all his images, he is in harmony with the rest of Scripture. In the book of Job even, though the author does not rank amongst the prophets, we find this phrase : Brimstone shall be rained upon the dwelling of the wicked.

EUGENE.—Our explanation is complete, except that these horses, to the number of two hundred millions—for St John hears the number of them—do not appear until after the four angels bound in the Euphrates are loosed. What connexion is there between the Euphrates and this mighty cavalry ? Bossuet says that the Persian cavalry crossed the Euphrates in

great numbers, and from thence began the decline of the empire. This has at least a shadow of probability ; but you have given no attempt even at solution.

THE OFFICER.—In the Sacred Word the Euphrates signifies the inward spirit, or the rational. This signification was given to it because it served as the limit of the land of Canaan on the Assyrian side, and Assyria itself was the type of the rational faculty. You ought not to be surprised at finding a country characterised, in emblematical language, by a moral attribute, any more than at seeing the animals of these countries employed to represent them. Were an extatic of our day describing the inhabitants of Europe, he would say : Here I behold industry, meaning England ; there metaphysics, or Germany ; while mind and France would of course be synonymous.

MYSELF.—In fact, the authors of Holy Scripture must have attached moral ideas to the countries by which they were surrounded ; for a crowd of allusions are made to them that are otherwise unexplainable. Do they not speak incessantly of Egypt and Euphrates, of Assyria and the Nile, in a manner which forces us to believe that moral ideas were hidden under these images ?

THE OFFICER.—True ; Jeremiah says to the Jews : Of what use is it to go in the way of Assyria, to drink the water of her river ? Could words express more clearly, that, for those who are enlightened by God, it is useless to drink of merely human wisdom ? Isaiah represents Jehovah stretching out his hand over the Euphrates ; and when the Israelites abandon the true faith, he says : God made the waters of Euphrates to cover them. The King of Assyria shall traverse the land of Judah, and overflow it. Now that the sense of the word is fixed, let us see what the angels bound upon this river mean. They are the interior or hidden thoughts of the pretended rational man. In fact, unloose the secret thoughts chained down by rationality, and you will soon see a train of unbridled instincts as terrible to behold as that fearful cavalry by which they are figured in the Apocalypse. Is it not true that civil life, or rational habits, bind down our secret impure thoughts, our criminal desires ? But were these merely exterior bonds once broken, would not the human heart shew itself in all its deformity ? All the sensualists we see assume an appearance of moral life, because their inner sentiments are not manifested ; but break the bond that restrains them, and something savage, something akin to fallen brute nature, will appear even in the midst of civilisation. This is the reason why, in great revolutions, when all social bonds are broken that chained man down upon the great river Euphrates, so much of what is hideous and barbarous appears in human nature.

MYSELF.—Doubtless ; for the mere sensualist is ever cruel.

It is only the bonds of society that hinder us from seeing them in all their hideousness. Take away these bonds, and we find them ready to spread death and destruction everywhere. St John has done this, and therefore we see these Satanic spirits under their true form. I can well imagine the countless perversities that will spring forth from these unchained souls, and the serpent tails they will exhibit. But why have they serpents' heads? Is it to bite? In fact, why are heads mentioned here at all?

EUGENE.—Bossuet, still considering these horsemen as Persians, says that the serpent tails mean the arrows shot by the armies of this nation even when turning their back to their enemies. You see that St John was well acquainted with the Parthian customs. There is some cleverness in this explanation. These horsemen had breastplates like fire, of jacinth, and brimstone. Now, I comprehend all the emblems except jacinth. What does it mean? Bossuet thinks it a mere simile for the polished steel of the Persian cuirasses glittering in the sunlight.

THE OFFICER.—The jacinth, whose colour is of a blended red and white, signifies love of truth. For that reason, it was lavished profusely in the ornaments of the temple and the vestments of the priests. In an opposite sense, as all emblems are dual, it means the hellish love of falsehood. Jeremiah, describing the false prophets of his time, says that jacinth and purple were in their robes. Again, as the love of falsehood concerns the rational faculties, Ezekiel reproaches Samaria with her prostitutions, and says that she doats on her neighbours the Assyrians, who are clothed in jacinth. You see, therefore, how natural it is that St John should behold this emblem rising from the Euphrates. As to the horses' tails, I can only repeat what I said concerning the tails of the locusts. The principle is the same. The serpent is the type of sensualism in its lowest degree. Does not Micah, speaking of men of this degree, say: They shall lick the dust like serpents? And by the heads appearing at the extremity of these tails, we may understand that such men make sensual things the chief aim of life. The remainder of the chapter is quite comprehensible. The men who are not killed spiritually by these horsemen, and who yet do not repent of their evil works, are evidently those who have not carried as far as the others the sensual principles arising from a mere philosophical belief in religious doctrine, but who yet, believing that nothing beyond a mere belief is necessary, cannot apply the principle of religion to their moral life. How could they repent of their works, if persuaded that faith, dead faith alone, was sufficient for salvation? How repent of their vices, when the religious law, never having access to their conscience, could

not reproach them? Why not continue to worship idols, as St John says, for are not these idols the calculations of human reason, the only rule of conduct acknowledged by such men? Why should not all the sins forbidden by the Decalogue, and enumerated here briefly by the Apostle, germinate in their heart?

EUGENE.—Yes, there can be no mistake here; such must be the result of a mere intellectual religious belief, by which repentance, and the holy life that follows it, is logically excluded from the idea of faith. I do not see anything arbitrary in the explanation. It is but a true reading of the human heart.

Your signification of the idol also pleases me. It is said, in the commandments of God: Thou shalt not make any graven image; thou shalt have no gods before me.

How simple the solution! If the idol be of stone, does it not mean a perverted truth, one made, as it were, by man; if of gold, perverted love; if of silver, the pure spiritual distorted to meet human desires? But St John adds, idols of wood. What do they mean?

THE OFFICER.—Wood signifies works; it derives its meaning from the tree that produces it. Now, the tree that gives fruit is the hieroglyphic of the man that does works. My little children, says St John, keep yourselves from idols. Does not that signify, guard yourselves from your own reasonings? How often has the workman fallen down to worship the image he has himself created! Is not the emblem striking? These idols, says Jeremiah, are the work of their wise men. What irony in this term! Every man, he adds, is brutish in his knowledge—every founder is confounded by his graven image; for his molten image is falsehood—there is no breath in them. No allegory could speak more plainly. And Habakkuk says: What profit in the graven image which the teacher of lies has made? He trusts in it, but there is no breath at all in the midst of it. When have merely human reasoning been better characterised?

The ingenious ancients had some dim notion also of this truth when they fabled Pygmalion falling in love with a statue, the work of his own hands. And now, friends, we have come to the end of this terrible chapter of the locusts, and enriched our vocabulary with many terms which will enable us, I hope, to walk more fearlessly through the scenes that follow.

For the present we may rest, I think.

EUGENE.—I scarcely thought the Apocalypse could be read so fluently, and followed, word by word, as exactly as you have done. Why, your explanations would furnish matter for an infinite number of erudite essays, after the manner of the learned Academicians; and I can scarcely persuade myself that

your solid, as well as ingenious solutions, should have sprung entirely from your own head. I have, indeed, great confidence in your ability; still, you surely must have borrowed something from some other theorist whose works have hitherto escaped us. What deep philosophy! What a complete emblematical language! What knowledge of the human heart! What profound acquaintance with Holy Scripture! And, I will add, what intuitive acquaintance with the spirit world! You are not an extatic, my dear friend; yet one might think a visionary had breathed into your ear all these strange and beautiful things.

THE OFFICER.—Well, before I explain the sources whence I drew my theories, I pray you test them well by the light of your own reason. By that alone I would have them judged. If I rely on the testimony of a great man, or quote a clever book, you submit to a sort of human authority, whereas you should acknowledge no authority but that of God, and the doctrine which has emanated from him.

MYSELF.—'Tis well so; and your advice reminds me of that proud answer—"I fear God, Abner, but I fear nought else."

We, too, friends, should bow to no other authority than God and Truth. Let us then continue our examination, and seek afterwards for the genius who has led us towards these marvellous discoveries.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rev., chaps. x. xi.

THE BOOK AND THE TWO WITNESSES.

MYSELF.—The Apocalyptic drama, my friends, begins to unfold its abstrusest portions, yet we can read almost without difficulty. I little thought the locusts and the river Euphrates could have been explained so clearly, yet now I can read even this terrible chapter without bewilderment. Oh! if I were in the spiritual world, methinks I would clothe men in strange accoutrements. Have you not often traced a singular relation between human and animal physiognomies, particularly when looking only at the facial angle, and concealing the inferior portion of the face? I have found resemblances, more or less strongly marked, to apes, foxes, and even pigs, and I have no doubt that such resemblance is the index of some remarkable analogy between the human and animal races. Therefore we should not be astonished if the faces of animals serve as hieroglyphics of the various faculties, as well as the various passions, of men. So let us proceed with the beasts of the Apocalypse; probably there will be nothing alarming in an attempt at solution.

EUGENE.—First let us see what is the meaning of this book mentioned in the tenth chapter, which was so sweet in the mouth, and bitter when eaten. Like St John, Ezekiel saw and ate a book of this description. You remember Tasso's lines about honey being put on the edge of the cup, to make the child swallow the bitter contents? Could he have borrowed the idea from Scripture?

THE OFFICER.—This chapter need not detain us long; you know all the emblems already. Taken as a whole, it is a manifestation of the opinion which those have of the Lord who hold the dogma of faith alone. Thus, you see, he appears to St John here as he did in the first chapter, with a rainbow round his head, his face like the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. The Apostle adds, that he was clothed with a cloud. This requires an explanation. You know we are told that the

Son of Man should come in the clouds. Now, as we do not expect to see Jesus Christ in person really in the clouds, we must seek the inner meaning of the emblem.

The clouds spoken of here represent the mists of the understanding, which are so often compared to clouds. The Son of Man appears in clouds; that is to say, amid the mists of a darkened intellect; and here we may consider him as the Word itself, since the Word and he are but one. These clouds signify the veil which always hides the true meaning of the Word from the carnal mind. The Lord, continues the Apostle, held a small open book in his hand. Is it not evident this book is the one he has given us? Could an extatic see any other in the hands of the Redeemer, than the Word in which he is revealed?

We saw that the book taken by the Lamb was the Word; and of course the emblem means the same here. The book being open, designates truth manifested; and, as the Lord himself holds it, the truth thus shewn openly must concern himself. Now the truth manifested is this:—That the Lord himself is the only God, divine in his humanity, and consequently the same as Jehovah.

Observe, in the fourth chapter, the Lamb, or the Mediator, is represented under an animal form, to express the apparent inferiority established in the work of redemption between him and his Father.

Here we have no longer the animal form, but the human in all its perfection. He no longer takes the book from the hands of him who sits upon the throne, but he holds it himself; and there is no longer a throne to be seen, nor any one above him. While, to prove that he alone has the power of salvation, he places one foot upon the earth, and the other on the sea. Is that not clearly saying—I am the beginning and the end; behold the Word which I have given you; read, and you will find that I am the only God?

EUGENE.—In fact, this representation is identical with that under which the prophets figure Jehovah. Isaiah says: The earth is his footstool—an expression quoted by Christ himself in his Sermon on the Mount; and there is every probability that St John sees here the Lord himself, who, by an open book, indicates that the truths which concern him are manifested; but the Apostle adds, that his voice was like the roaring of a lion. What does that signify?

THE OFFICER.—The Apostle compares the complaint of the Lord for the loss of the children he has bought, to the roaring of a lion for her young. Remember this is but a representation offered to the extatic, and not the cry of the Lord himself, for, being inaccessible to our eyes, he can only be manifested under some appearance.

This appearance is always God himself to the extatic ; but to others who look upon the picture it is different. The prophets of the Law saw Jehovah under the appearance of an angel ; and thus, too, he appeared to Abraham.

It is not surprising, therefore, to see him figured thus by St John ; neither is the sound he has given to his voice an invention. Isaiah says : The voice of Jehovah is like the roaring of a lion. And Jeremiah : Jehovah shall roar from the heights of heaven. Joel speaks after the same manner. And Job says : God roars with his voice.

The lion being the emblem of power, it is not surprising to compare his roar to the power of God's Word entering the ear of the extatic. The thunders are equally employed to represent something manifested from on high. Seven thunders, says St John, uttered their voices. All heaven resounded with the truth then proclaimed. Nothing is simpler than the solution of this. Thunder, in Scripture, is always a sign of Divine manifestation. We have discussed that before.

MYSELF.—Then this emblem, reduced to the most rational expression, signifies that St John having seen in the spirit world how the dogma of faith alone destroys all vital religion, now perceives, further, how irreconcilable this dogma is with a true idea of the Redeemer. As soon as this idea becomes impressed on his mind, the Redeemer himself appears to him with all the attributes of Jehovah, to indicate his identity with him ; while, at the same time, the book which proves this truth is laid open to his eyes. Just as, in ordinary life, when we want to convince a man respecting some point contained in a book, we open the book itself before him—that is all quite simple. But why, just as the prophet is going to write down this truth, so necessary to man's soul, is he forbidden to do it ? Surely the book might as well have not been opened at all ?

THE OFFICER.—Why does God always reserve places and times to himself ? You ask why a truth is not divulged as soon as born of the Holy Spirit. This is to ask from God an account of his purposes.

Truths may be useful at one time which are hurtful at another. The human race, like the earth, must be prepared before receiving seed. Thus even unaided philosophy can answer your question ; but, to answer you according to the principles of extatics, the reason is this : St John sees representatively the things of the future, and in his ignorance may take the beginning of the work for the end. Not yet initiated in the designs of God, he knows not that other scenes are about to pass before his eyes, and that only after the time expressed by the series of these scenes can he write the truth adequately, for then only will he know it completely. Is it not a simple matter to admit that an extatic, who is still but

a limited human intellect, may take the passing instant of a scene for the whole scene itself? Is it not natural that, in his ignorance of Divine things, he should manifest an impatience, which is instantly repressed? There is nothing which has more the appearance of truth in the Apocalypse than this allusion to the feebleness of man's reason, which can embrace no more at one time than a single ring of the great chain of destiny which God unrolls to his eyes. Is it not so with all human events? At the commencement of a great political drama, do we not all imagine we see its entire fulfilment? In 1790, many thought they could then write the history of the French Revolution! Had they been in the Spirit at that moment, a voice from the spiritual world would have said to them, as to St John: Write not, thou shalt see other things besides these.

EUGENE.—Quite true, and as perfectly consonant to reason as if taken from the history of the human heart itself. An extatic is not like God. The future is shewn him, but his eye can only discern objects successively. These he recounts to man as they strike him, not knowing whether they form the last of the series to be revealed; and this very imperfection in the narrator proves the truth of his narrative.

The angel representing the Lord swears by himself. This is a very frequent expression in Scripture. Jehovah swears by his own name frequently throughout the Old Testament; but the Lord swears here that there should be time no longer. What does that mean? Is it the annihilation of material nature, to give place to a life in which fixed time and space do not exist?

THE OFFICER.—Time, in emblematical language, signifies a state; therefore it is said there shall be no longer any state of spiritual life. In fact, can there any church exist without recognising God alone as its foundation? Now, when time exists no longer, God will provide a new church, in which he will be all in all. To say to spirits: Time shall be longer, means the same thing as saying: A time will come when religion shall cease to exist. Zechariah, when announcing the same event, says: There will come a day, known to Jehovah alone, in which there shall be neither day nor night. Is it not clear that the prophet expresses the idea of time here by the word day? What other measure have we of sidereal time than day and night?

The same angel, in continuation, says: That in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound his trumpet, the mystery shall be consummated. You see clearly, therefore, that since this day comes after the period when time shall end, it signifies plainly that the word time means a state, and not duration. The consummation of the mystery

is easily explained. It is the fulfilment of all which the prophetic word, the true mystery, has announced to man.

MYSELF.—In that case the consummation has come already, for you seem to have perfectly unravelled all the mysteries of the prophetic word. Do not you observe a striking resemblance to Daniel in these passages? The angel seen by St John swears by Him who liveth for ever and ever that all shall be finished; and Daniel says: The man clothed in linen held up his right hand, and swore by Him that liveth for ever that it should be for a time, times, and a half, when all should be finished; and he, too, like St John, is told: Go thy way, for the words are closed up and sealed, until the time of the End. I can only explain this by supposing that Daniel beheld the final destinies of the Jewish Church, and St John those of the Christian.

THE OFFICER.—Very right. Just add, that those predictions which have not evidently received their fulfilment at the fall of the Jewish Church, also refer to the same events which St John beheld figuratively. In short, there is the same God for the two Churches; it is the same Spirit which dictated their visions to the two prophets; and the first, like the last, saw all time concentrated in one point; so that the New Jerusalem binds into one sheaf all known truths.

MYSELF.—We shall examine that point another time. At present, let us keep merely to St John. He was told to eat the book, which injunction he obeys. And the book, sweet as honey in the mouth, becomes bitter in the stomach.

THE OFFICER.—By the book is expressed the doctrine contained therein. Well, this doctrine is that which concerns the unity of the Lord—his Divine humanity, as we stated a little while since. Now, is it not clear that a doctrine which makes the unity of God a primary doctrine of religion, and gives peace to those minds which were bewildered by the incoherent idea of three Divine persons—is it not clear, I say, that this doctrine, so soothing and comforting in itself, has been falsified and distorted in all communions, till it has turned to bitterness in the hearts of the receivers? We see how the Divine humanity has been misjudged, when it is asserted that God was a mere man as regards the body he assumed in the world; and how falsely his position as Mediator is separated from that which he holds as Universal Principle of all that exists, till men believe themselves saved by the mere idea that he has taken on him the sins of men.

EUGENE.—In short, there never was such a luminous doctrine perverted by such gross superstitions. Like St John, my pleasure is turned into disgust when I think of them. Even philosophically speaking, how poor is that doctrine that denies the perfect unity of God! A God acting as Mediator

between the true God and us, and saving men who merely believe without more being required of them ; a God who does not regard the actions, but an avowal of the lips only, a mere consent of the intellect ; a God who receives the predestinated, no matter what action they may commit ;—surely no dogma could be more revolting to reason than this. But, on the contrary, to believe that the same God who redeemed man also created, or rather, we should say, regenerated him ; that it is the same God who is revealed in the two Testaments, announcing himself in one, and fulfilling his own prophecies in the other—all this is received with pleasure and gratitude by the mind. However, we should try and ascertain if such be the true meaning of St John's words.

MYSELF.—You remember that Ezekiel also is given a book to eat—evidently meaning a doctrine to be received ; and Ezekiel finds it sweet to the taste, without any after bitterness, if I recollect rightly. The image here, therefore, must refer to the Christian world, who have so distorted the pure and beautiful doctrine of the redemption, and overlaid it with so many extravagancies and subtleties. In truth, I agree with St John, the doctrine thus has become very bitter. Had I received it in the spirit world under the form of a book, no doubt it would have seemed to me, as to him, sweet to the feelings, but full of bitterness on reflection.

I think the verse that terminates the chapter, in which it is announced to St John that he must prophesy again before many peoples and nations, and tongues, and kings, has reference entirely to the work he has to do in the spirit world ; for, so far as this earth is concerned, we hear no more of him after the Apocalypse. Without going into details, therefore, let us pass on to the two witnesses of the eleventh chapter.

EUGENE.—First, I must confess to a little incredulity arising in my mind with reference to our explanations. Sometimes we are transported, by the words of the book, to the light of the third heaven, then suddenly dropped again amid the darkness of incomprehensibility. When the heart is moved by anything, we experience conviction ; if the understanding alone is concerned, we are apt to doubt. This may be the cause why our commentary on this passage seems to me, like that of Bossuet, only a gratuitous supposition. We are trying to develop opinions in St John's words which this Apostle probably never entertained ; for, in fact, our explanations concern only a point of theological controversy upon an article of Christian belief. We trace no allusions to pagan traditions, nothing even connected with the Old Testament.

THE OFFICER.—But is it not quite a simple matter to conclude that no connexion is necessary between a dogma peculiar to Christian faith and pagan fables, or Jewish prophets ? St

John saw things solely relative to the Christian Church, and all is consistent with that one idea. How many things do we find in Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, which are only applicable to the Jewish people! To say that we here attribute to St John an opinion peculiar to himself, destroys nothing of the validity of his testimony. If he truly held these opinions of the Christian doctrine, no doubt he would see them developed in his visions. That is quite conformable to the principles we have established.

MYSELF.—Very true; and if our friend proves that St John has expressed these same opinions in his Gospel, then, dear Eugene, you cannot say we impute opinions to him gratuitously.

THE OFFICER.—The identity of Christ and Jehovah is fully proved by the Apostle in that memorable discourse which was pronounced by Jesus Christ before his passion, wherein he exhorts his disciples in so touching a manner, and says to Philip: Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Indeed the whole discourse is but one continued proof that he and the Father are one. As regards the Divinity assuming humanity within a defined time, this is expressly established in the first chapter of St John's Gospel; for everywhere the Apocalypse and the Gospel confirm each other. Study them in this spirit, and you will be surprised at the truth of my words. Therefore we do not gratuitously impute certain opinions to St John regarding Jesus Christ, but deduce them from his writings. Do not you see this?

EUGENE.—Clearly; and further, if St John affirms everywhere the divinity of Christ's humanity, and that the Father and he are truly one—with this difference, that the Father is God manifested in the highest circle of creation, and the Son God manifested in the lowest—if, I say, there be all this in St John's Gospel, then he ought to find the same doctrine in the book opened to him in the spirit world. In that world each one sees his own inner convictions laid before him, and is thus confirmed in his opinions; and, in fact, we do find this doctrine everywhere in the Apocalypse. Christ is called the Alpha and the Omega, which phrase completes the full expression of God—the first and the last—the same in the centre, as in the limits, of creation.

THE OFFICER.—Then we are clear upon this point; but we must not call this doctrine merely the opinion of St John. It is that of the Holy Spirit, who dictated the book to him; and the words of an inspired book are the words of God himself. St John is but the transcriber of absolute truth—the organ of God—not the expresser of his own peculiar sentiments. Thus my proposition is limited to affirming that St John has expressed, under an image in the spirit world, the eternal truth

which God dictated to him before in his Gospel. If the Apocalypse confirms the Gospel, I take it as a confirmation from heaven.

MYSELF.—And I also. Some other time, let us return to this Gospel, in which the history of the Redemption is related in so profound a manner; but, at present, pray pass on to the next chapter. If Eugene is not convinced, at least he seems to have no further objections to offer.

EUGENE.—We all agreed, my friends, not to be content with mere probabilities; here, however, we have arrived at a point where explanation becomes an absolute impossibility; for, as St John was not permitted to write what he saw, we can only suppose the nature of his vision. As far as we are able to go, no explanation can be more satisfactory than yours. I am inclined to think that the book was the Gospel, and also that the angel who held it was Christ. The contents of the book, therefore, should be conformable to the contents of the Gospel, and that admitted, the sweet and bitter results of the eating is quite natural: sweet in the mouth—that is to say, in the present; bitter in the stomach—that is to say, in the future. Now let us proceed to the two witnesses. They are not named. Who do you suppose these personages to be?

THE OFFICER.—They are, indeed, two personages, like all the moral qualities when personified; but we must consider them as two doctrinal truths, and not two men.

MYSELF.—Yet it is said they shall prophesy in sackcloth; that out of their mouth shall proceed fire; that they shall be killed, and their dead bodies laid in the street without sepulture; that afterwards they shall rise upon their feet, and finally ascend to heaven. All this can only have reference to two men.

EUGENE.—Ah! my friend, when the poet paints vice and virtue, does he not make them speak? Does he not robe them after some fashion or another? The difficulty is not there; it consists rather in ascertaining exactly what two moral truths are represented, and if the part assigned to them by St John be conformable to their nature.

THE OFFICER.—This chapter is the continuation of the one preceding, and has reference to the same subject. The objects summoned to appear in both are manifested between the sounding of the sixth trumpet and that of the seventh. Therefore we are still engaged with the same subject. The doctrine was before us just now; at present the witnesses to it appear.

The whole Gospel, according to St John, can be reduced to these two fundamental truths, denied only by those who trust for salvation to faith alone:—1st, That there is but one God, who is Jesus Christ the Lord; 2dly, That man should live accord-

ing to the precepts of the Decalogue. You observe, these are the precise truths ignored by those who believe themselves justified by faith only. Looking for safety to the merits of Christ, and praying God the Father to save them in consideration of these merits, they address themselves to something with which man has no affinity ; for it is only through Jesus Christ that he knows the Deity.

In the second place, by affirming that faith alone saves, they destroy the whole foundation of religion. They pretend that a good work done by man cannot be conjoined with the gratuitous work of the Holy Spirit, who does all without the intervention of man. All good, consequently, performed with a view to salvation, is by them considered evil. Is it not necessary, therefore, for the two witnesses of real religion to appear, in order to combat such a doctrine ?

MYSELF.—But you still personify these two truths, calling them witnesses.

THE OFFICER.—Well, witnesses or testimonies, it is the same thing. Christ says plainly in St John : I bear witness of myself ; and the Evangelist calls him afterwards in this book the faithful and true witness. Christ says again : When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will bear witness of me. Christ is so emphatically the witness, and the only witness of himself, that he says likewise in the same Gospel : You sent to John, and he bore witness of the truth ; as for me, I receive not testimony from men.

EUGENE.—This point seems incontestable, and what confirms it are these proofs taken from the Gospel of St John. It shews the unity of idea pervading the two works of the same Apostle. But why should the moral life, or religion in works, be also called a witness ?

MYSELF.—Ah ! my friend, your understanding is very obtuse to-day. Are not works, which are necessarily in the lowest degree, the manifestation, and consequently the witness, of the principle that produced them. An enlightened Principle carried out in Works, are not these the true witnesses of religion, rejected only by the disciples of faith alone ?

THE OFFICER.—There is no conjunction possible between man and God without the precepts of the Decalogue, and therefore the latter is called the Testimony. You shall place in the Ark the Testimony that I will give you, is said in Exodus. In Numbers and Leviticus also, there are many passages concerning the two tables in which they are called the testimony. What testimony further would you exact ?

EUGENE.—Probability is on your side, but not absolute certainty, since St John does not name the two witnesses ; you find them, however, in the Bible, and I am ready to agree with you that you have named them aright. Now let us read

this eleventh chapter through, beginning from the commencement.

A reed is given to St John to measure the temple ; but he is forbidden to measure the outer court, which is given up to the Gentiles, who are to tread the holy city under foot forty and two months. To measure the temple means to ascertain the quality and state of the Church ; the altar is the Church in heaven ; the outer court the Church on earth, delivered up to the Gentiles, that is to say, to human passions. The forty-two months puzzle me, and indeed the emblem of the reed is not very clear.

THE OFFICER.—The reed or stick is a supplemental arm, and like it, therefore, signifies power, the power to act. In fact, the arms and hands, by which man performs almost all actions of life, manifest his power. The instruments which these organs conduct and direct have the same signification. Thus, you see everywhere a rod assumed as the emblem of command ; throughout all offices or functions of men, from the king's sceptre to the shepherd's staff, from the marshal's baton to the bishop's crosier, a stick or wand expresses power and pre-eminence. Amongst magicians, also, the wand was used to command the elements. When Isaiah wishes to describe man resting on his own strength, he describes him as leaning on a staff that pierced his hand. How clear and striking this signification ! The staff of strength, the staff of honour, says Jeremiah, has been broken. Thou hast broken the heads of the infidels with staves, exclaims Habakkuk. Israel, says Jeremiah, is Jehovah's staff of heritage. Moses was armed with a rod when he performed those wonders in Egypt which sceptics and rationalists, who do not understand the language of correspondences, affirm were effected by mere sleight of hand.

MYSELF.—I breathe more freely now that we have left the domain of theological mysticism, and returned to our curious investigations concerning the primitive emblems. There can be no doubt of the meaning here. I have heard that in the extatic sleep, the empire of man over his passions is typified by a staff such as is used to drive animals ; and as the profane may be employed to prove the sacred, I would say that the correctness of your explanation of this emblem is fully established by the evident use made of the wand by diviners, enchanters, and through all the phenomena of magical art. Let us now proceed to discuss the forty-two months.

THE OFFICER.—Forty-two months comprise three years and a-half ; in other words, the number expressed here is three and a-half. Now, as three signifies totality as regards the true, and the half the commencement of another whole similar to the first, it is beyond all question that the meaning here is,

that the court of the temple shall be delivered up to men during one complete period, and until the beginning of another. The prophet might have said forty-two years, or forty-two days, which are natural divisions as distinctly marked as months; but he has chosen the period measured by the moon, for the reason I already gave you. Thus, to deliver up the court to the Gentiles during forty-two months, means that the Church on earth will be left a prey to its errors until the consummation of this Church, and the birth of the new one that is to follow.

EUGENE.—You walk here without stumbling. One would say you had been a fellow-witness of all these things with St John, you speak with so much certainty. I find my faith returning to me again.

THE OFFICER.—St John measures—that is to say, comprehends perfectly. The measure of a thing is, in fact, the expression of its quality. In Ezekiel, we find an angel measuring the house of God, the temple, the altar, and the court. In Zechariah, another angel is described with a measuring line in his hand. Whither goest thou? asks the prophet. I go to measure Jerusalem, is the angel's answer. Isaiah says: It is Jehovah who has measured the earth. Is not that saying: It is God who knows his Church? The outer court, as you have no doubt divined, is the Church on earth; for is not the Church in this, its lowest degree, the vestibule of heaven? All Scripture is full of allusions made to the court of the temple, and invariably in this sense. One day in Thy courts, saith David, is worth a thousand passed elsewhere.

MYSELF.—It is needless to cite proofs, for the word carries its own signification along with it. The vision of St John referred to the end of the Church; but only those things connected with the Church in heaven were revealed to him, leaving him ignorant, for the moment, of the destiny of the earthly Church. Let us proceed; perhaps the rest of the chapter will teach us what that may be.

THE OFFICER.—St John continues: I will give unto my two witnesses to prophesy during 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. You know the meaning of the witnesses, therefore I pass on.

EUGENE.—Wait a moment. What of the 1260 days and the sackcloth?

THE OFFICER.—1260 days comprise exactly three years and a-half. Now, three and a-half signify, as we have just seen, the end of one period and the beginning of another. Here days are substituted for months, because days are measured by the diurnal revolution of the sun, which is the emblem of love. You need not have paused for an explanation there. As to the sackcloth, is it not the symbol of mourning? A robe of any kind is symbolic of truth; but sackcloth, of which robes

are not ordinarily made, expresses perfectly the absence of all truth; and, in fact, do not the two witnesses we have quoted present themselves to the Apostle as two uncomprehended truths, despised, outraged, and consequently appearing to his imagination robed in mourning? The Jews covered themselves with sackcloth, to express grief for the decay of their Church. Jeremiah says: The lion has devastated the earth; cover yourselves with sackcloth, and utter cries and lamentations. But I might quote all Scripture in support of this interpretation.

MYSELF.—No, it is not necessary. These two witnesses, it is said in the following verse, are the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth; which clearly signifies the love and wisdom proceeding from God alone—the olive being the symbol of love; the candlestick, enlightenment by the truth. These, united, form the whole Church. What symbol can be more perfect! Oil, which typifies good, is extracted from the olive. How all harmonises together! I remember that Zechariah saw likewise a candlestick, near which were two olive-trees; and these, he is told, are the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the earth. What a remarkable agreement! And no doubt there was a corresponding meaning in the Mount of Olives being so often honoured by the presence of Him who came for love of us to shew us the way and the life! How full of meaning is every term! You see I have already made considerable progress in your explanatory doctrine. Proceed, Eugene, to the next verse.

EUGENE.—We are told, if any man will hurt the witnesses, fire proceedeth out of their mouth to kill their enemies. Well, here is the same beautiful idea that struck me so much before—the reaction of opposite upon opposite. Whoever seeks to destroy the testimony of truth in his heart, will perish by hell-fire. The fire appears to come from the personification of truth, though in reality nothing but good can proceed from it; but as the truth torments those who do not act thereby, so the infernal fire, which kills men, is attributed by them to it. In the same sense the Hebrews said that the breath of Jehovah was a fire that consumed the wicked. Without doubt the same Divine love that warms pious souls acts on the impious with a torment that may be said to burn them. This is the true hell-fire, my friends. I never comprehended it before.

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah says positively that punishment shall be in flames of fire; nothing can be more decided than that. I shall now explain the next verse, though in a short time you will be able to proceed without my help, and I shall merely be a listener. The two witnesses have the power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecies; to turn the

waters into blood; and to smite the earth with various plagues.

EUGENE.—Rather let me explain it, for it has a connexion with what I have been already saying. Those men who will not receive truth, attribute to the witnesses power to shut up heaven, though they have, in truth, closed it against themselves; they believe, likewise, that the witnesses prevent the rain from falling, though their own will has placed them in a state that unfits them for receiving the beneficent dews of heaven.

THE OFFICER.—True; for in Deuteronomy it is said plainly that doctrine falls as the rain, and is distilled as the dew. In other places, it is added: If you serve strange gods, Jehovah will shut up heaven, that there be no more rain. See how exact, therefore, is the language of St John. As the rain descends from heaven, saith Isaiah, so are the words proceeding from the mouth of Jehovah. And the Psalmist says: Thou makest the rain of kindness to fall.

To turn water into blood is to falsify truth; and to smite the earth with plagues, means, as we explained before, that persons who reject truth fall into falsities of all kinds, and then attribute to heaven the plagues which they have brought upon themselves. These plagues of which the wicked complain are their own works; for evil is never more than a negation: God does not produce it. And in this sense we ought to read all the passages of the Bible where it is said that Jehovah has stricken the earth with plagues.

MYSELF.—That is perfectly clear; and I really think we can proceed now in the explanation without your help. Let us try, Eugene, first, what you and I can do by ourselves. When the two witnesses have finished their testimony, the beast shall kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. What do you say to that, Eugene? I confess to being a little puzzled.

EUGENE.—And I also. We must refer again to our interpreter. You see, my friend, we presumed a little too much upon our own strength.

THE OFFICER.—The beast that shall conquer and kill these truths is evidently the religious community who will not admit them, who entirely reject them. This community is presented to St John under the form of an individual, because in the spirit world masses are always personified as one collective being. All primitive languages recognise this mode of expression.

MYSELF.—And even in our own, by metaphor, a nation or a tribe is always characterised as an individual. Society we speak of as one body, which we call the body politic.

EUGENE.—And this body takes the form of a beast to the

eyes of St John, because it is a perverted form of the true and good. In a word, it is the representation of the bad and false in the extremes of the spiritual world. This society has all the qualities of a beast; it is degraded and cruel. It will conquer and kill Divine truths; that is, banish and exterminate them from the hearts of men. Such a fatal victory will be permitted of God. But what a strange vision! Here we have two truths, under the image of two dead bodies, lying extended in the public street of a city in the spiritual world! Corpses where there is no more death! Cities where all is immaterial! Ah, my friends, the cloud is coming back over my reason—the sun is growing dark.

THE OFFICER.—Then your reason grows alarmed very easily. Is not the appearance of spiritual death a very natural object to the eyes of an extatic? And the great city—Sodom or Egypt—is the form under which false doctrine is represented to him. There is nothing so incongruous in representing a doctrine by a town; but let us pause here for a moment. Even as the good see the wicked as corpses, so the wicked in their turn consider good men, or, what is the same thing, truth and goodness, as dead things for them. To the dwellers in Sodom or Egypt the two witnesses appear beings without life. You know that a spiritual idea is a real being, therefore the metaphor is quite just. To say that, after these two witnesses shall have finished prophesying, the world will despise them, is not a very obscure mode of expression; and to say afterwards that the world will conquer and kill them, is only using a very frequently repeated form of Scriptural expression. Is there not a constant struggle going on between good and evil? and does not the latter frequently, in appearance, triumph over light?

MYSELF.—As Ahrimanes gains the victory over Oromazes; as the serpents of autumn put to death the lamb of spring. The struggle is written on the face of heaven—we cannot hesitate to believe. Christ came into the world to make war upon the prince of this world; and, according to his example, our life should be a perpetual combat against our carnal inclinations. Do not the prophets represent Jehovah as a hero? Is he not called the God of armies? Do they not tell of the heavenly host? Were we to take the wars spoken of by Daniel literally, as wars between earthly kings, the blood of all the inhabitants of the world would not have sufficed for such combats. No; they are spiritual combats between good and evil, falsehood and truth. There can be no doubt of that. The Levites, who were the Jewish priests, are called the host. Thus, that a doctrine of falsehood and evil should consider truths emanating from God as things without life, is perfectly admissible. The streets of the city mentioned here, however, are probably a figure.

THE OFFICER.—Doubtless ; they express the good and true revealed publicly in doctrine, as articles are exhibited openly in the streets of a city. Truth, says Isaiah, has stumbled in the streets, and justice cannot advance. In Nahum we read : The chariots run violently in the streets. Now, chariots mean doctrines, as we explained before. In another passage it is said : I will destroy the nations ; I will lay their streets desolate. The ancients were in the habit of teaching in the public streets ; and, in imitation of the Hebrews, all other nations made the public square the place of assembly for all important deliberations. You remember the market-place where Demosthenes thundered ? the Forum, whence resounded the eloquent voice of Cicero ?

MYSELF.—With what a happy application you use the words thunder and voice here, and how natural seems the metaphor ! therefore, the thunders and voices of the Apocalypse should not startle us. After all, this book is not difficult to read.

THE OFFICER.—Observe, also, this passage in Jeremiah : The prophets who prophesy falsely shall be dragged dead through the streets of Jerusalem, and shall not be buried. Now, St John beholds a similar scene, but in the opposite sense—it is evil which he sees treating truth as falsehood is treated by the good. The two truths remain unburied, even as the prophets without sepulture. In the language of extatics, to be laid in earth signifies to give back to earth what man has received from her, as a necessary preliminary to ascending to heaven. A man who had not received burial, was thought still unpurified from his sins ; and the Greeks, you remember, in accordance with this idea, held that none could hope to enter Charon's bark who had not gone through the process of burial.

EUGENE.—I never comprehended, till now, those lines of Virgil's where he deplors the death of Palinurus. Your theory throws more light on the poet than the commentary of Heine ; in fact, from that originated the custom of leaving the bodies of animals to birds of prey. All sprang from some indistinct notion of the fate of man after death.

THE OFFICER.—In the Jewish Church, all men condemned to death were flung to the birds of heaven or the beasts of the field, to serve them as food. Jeremiah speaks of this usage ; and Isaiah says that the wicked has been torn from his sepulture like a malefactor.

EUGENE.—All that is incontrovertible. I merely wish to know why St John calls the doctrine that appeared to him under the form of a town, Sodom and Egypt, and adds, that there the Lord was crucified. The minute inquirer might remark here that, although Sodom was in reality a city, yet Egypt, being a country, was an aggregate of cities ; and further, that it was in Jerusalem, and nowhere else, that our

Lord was crucified. These geographical faults annoy me. It seems to me as if I were reading one of the old legends current in our country, where all epochs and events are confused together; where St Michael is represented as combating with muskets, and Paradise is placed in Lower Brittany!

THE OFFICER.—In the dictionary of emblematic language, as fixed by Scripture, Sodom signifies the impure love of self; Egypt, the pride of intellect. You see clearly that where the Lord is not acknowledged as the only God, and where the prohibitions of the Decalogue are not observed, it is impossible but that man will fall into these two sins, since the tendency towards them is born with him.

EUGENE.—True; every one will agree with you there. In fact, without revelation, man belongs only to himself; he falls into the love of self—a vice peculiar to the faculty we designate Will; at the same time, his pride is excessive, because pride is the vice natural to Intellect. Therefore, in the spirit world it is not incongruous to term those men dwellers in Sodom or Egypt, who acknowledge neither the moral law dictated to Moses, nor the regeneration brought by Jesus Christ. Tell me, however, does Scripture, think you, support this reading of the passage?

THE OFFICER.—The Sodom of antiquity, without doubt, represented the love of self brought to that lowest degradation in which it is manifested only by impurities. All the prophets make use of this metaphor in every page. As to Egypt, it is everywhere employed as emblematic of the love of truth as well as falsehood, according to the direction man gives his intellect. In the first sense, Egypt is called by Isaiah the Child of Wisdom. The Lord himself began his career, as we all begin ours, by going down into Egypt. See what an ardent desire for truth springs up in the soul of the regenerated man! St John uses Egypt in the opposite sense here. Ezekiel says: The foundations of Egypt shall be overthrown; the pride of her strength abased. Isaiah exclaims: Woe to those who go down into Egypt to look for help!

MYSELF.—How true! Woe to those who are strong in the pride of their own intellect!

THE OFFICER.—And the prophet, or, what is synonymous, the poet, continues: Egypt is a man, and not a god! There can be no doubt there, I think; and the Apostle could not have more distinctly characterised the rationalists of the other world, who deny the only God and his precepts, than by the application of these names.

MYSELF.—As inheritors of the primitive revelation, the Egyptians, like all other Orientals, understood the science of correspondences, and their wisdom was then worthy of praise; but when knowledge degenerated amongst them into

magic and idolatry, their knowledge, as regards spiritual things, was taken as the exact emblem of folly. Is not this so? And just in the same way, my friend, your theories, entering into strongly organised brains, would make a race of lofty philosophers, while, if they fell upon the shallow soil of weak souls, they would only produce a sect of silly dreaming fools.

THE OFFICER.—Well, let us conclude the subject in hand. Doubtless Jerusalem was the city where our Lord was crucified. The well-beloved disciple could not have forgotten that; but if the Jews crucified the Lord, it was because they denied his divinity. Every one, therefore, who denies the same doctrine, crucifies him likewise; if not actually, at least in thought. This style of speaking is familiar to all who feel vividly in religious matters, for we say frequently of blasphemers that they crucify the Lord afresh.

St John then stands absolved from absurdity. Besides, we have the unequivocal testimony of the prophets, who, foreseeing that Jerusalem was the city where the Lord would be denied, qualify it beforehand with the surname of Sodom. Isaiah says of the Jews: They published their sin openly like Sodom. Jeremiah asserts of adulterous prophets that they are before God like Sodom. The emblematical images furnished by the two towns may, therefore, very naturally be found associated in the recital of St John, without involving any contradiction.

EUGENE.—The chapter now can be read smoothly to the end. The tongues, tribes, and nations, designate all those who hold the doctrine of faith only; and these people will behold the two witnesses, or their dead bodies, extended during a period of three days and a-half; that is to say, truth will be dead to them during one complete period and the commencement of another.

MYSELF.—Wait. I must stop you here. The latter portion of the interpretation is indubitable; but you have not explained adequately the tribes, people, tongues, and nations.

THE OFFICER.—*The tribes* here mean all the errors and evils of the Church, as, in an opposite sense, the twelve tribes of Israel denoted the collective truths and graces of the Church. By *the people* is meant especially the errors of doctrine, as in the antagonistic sense it means the truths. *The nations* express those who are in good and evil as regards their lives. This is why in Scripture people and nations are always found conjoined in the same phrase; for truth and good, error and evil, always go together. The prophets invariably connect the two emblems. "Approach, ye nations, and hearken, ye people." Thus, these two words signify the false or true, good or evil, and the tribe is the union of both in one symbol. By *the tongues* is meant the confession of the doctrine; that is clear.

MYSELF.—And so your two little tables are found also in Scripture. The Nation expresses the Good, and consequently it is feminine, like the Will which produces the good. The People expresses the True, and is masculine, like the Understanding that receives the truth. Lastly, this duality has a direct relation to the third term of your second table, since the Tribe unites the signification of People and Nation, as the Effect contains the End and Cause. Setting aside grammatical puerilities, I must learn your table by heart; for by its means many clouds will pass away from the mysteries of Scripture. In fact, wherever I have met the two words people and nation conjoined, I had no other idea than that of a redundant expression. I am no longer astonished that commentators should have counted every word of such a book, for nothing seems uttered without a definite meaning. Let all nations rejoice, says Isaiah, and the people gather themselves together. Hitherto, I saw nothing here but an unnecessary repetition. Now I am learning to trace the full meaning.

THE OFFICER.—In that very passage you quote, observe how rejoicing is promised the *nations*, and the order of assembling given to the *people*. People rejoice with the heart; they assemble to discuss, deliberate, all matters belonging to the intellect. When the Psalmist says that Jehovah renders vain the *desire* of nations, and overthrows the *thoughts* of the people, does he not speak conformably to our two tables?

MYSELF.—What deep reflection and attention a book like this requires, where every word has a meaning! and yet you see children permitted to trifle with it, and youths, who have scarcely put on the virile toga, fling it aside as if they had fathomed its meaning, and found nothing further worthy their attention! Into what a world does this holy Book lead us! Having it, we might well dispense with all others; and well has it been called *the Bible*, for surely it is the book of books.

EUGENE.—Sincerely do I share your admiration; but let us continue our examination of the chapter. The inhabitants of the earth rejoice on seeing the two witnesses killed. In fact, the wicked are delighted to see truth outraged and contemned. They rejoice, and send gifts to one another. Now, what are these gifts?

THE OFFICER.—Gifts signify association, union; from thence the custom of interchanging them.

MYSELF.—And does not the proverb say: Gifts strengthen friendship? So the wicked, when the two witnesses are removed who tormented the inhabitants of the earth, join in closer bonds of union. And this is natural. Two truths, of which one commands men to recognise another God than themselves, and the second prohibits the indulgence of their

carnal instincts, are well fitted to offend that self-love which is innate in human nature.

Three days and a half afterwards, God restores them to life; that is, when the old religious society has passed away, and a new era commences. Then a voice bids them ascend to heaven. Is not that plain? Heaven is the native home of truth; from thence it descended, thither it leads back purified and enlightened man.

THE OFFICER.—Observe here, St John says the witnesses stood upon their feet. Now this has a meaning; for there are no chance forms of expression in this book, which some would have us believe was written under the inspiration of delirium or caprice. The feet signify the extremes, as you know. Now, this spiritual life descending into the natural life to fructify and animate it, appears fitly under the emblem of a symbolic being standing on his feet. You have already noticed that, when discussing the feet of the angel noticed by St John, Ezekiel says: When I had prophesied, the Spirit entered into them, and they stood upon their feet.

The Spirit is named first, being the principal; the feet last, being the effect. To Ezekiel himself, as representing doctrine, is said: Son of man, stand upon thy feet. Then the Spirit entered into me, and I stood upon my feet. These remarks may seem too minute, yet you ought to see that St John, in all things, resembles the extatics of the Old Testament.

EUGENE.—Well, proceed. The two witnesses having ascended into heaven, there is a great earthquake, by which seven thousand men perish. This signifies that St John saw the false Church shaken, and the whole number of those who followed it perish by spiritual death. The tenth part of the city fell; that is, the doctrine was overthrown. For ten signifies totality, and ten and the tenth part, like three and the third part, are synonymous. Then the seventh angel sounded, and the kingdoms of the world became the Lord's! It is the result of the preceding judgment. Lastly, the four-and-twenty elders chant their hymn of triumph, which we can comprehend without any explanation; and St John sees, in conclusion, the temple of God opened in heaven, and the Ark of his covenant in the temple, the whole scene accompanied by lightnings, earthquakes, thunderings, and hail, which, as we now know, symbolise invariably the reception of the good and true by the wicked and impious. I use the two words intentionally, for they are not synonymous; the wicked being those who sin from a depraved will, the impious those who fall from a perverted understanding.

MYSELF.—I congratulate you on your progress, and the perspicuity of your explanation; but you have passed rather

too lightly over the Temple of God, and the Ark within it. Will you, my friend, give us your opinion upon these ?

THE OFFICER.—In this last vision you see recapitulated the whole series of events which has occupied us throughout the chapter. It is a summary of images. The Temple of God is the manifestation of the belief in the Divine humanity ; the Ark which is contained in it is the moral law given, that we may live according to its precepts. Is not a temple the place where God receives the worship due to him ? Well, the locality is here used, to express the object for which it exists—the containing for the contained. Did not Jesus look on himself as the true temple, when he said to the Jews : Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up ? The Psalmist also says most beautifully : I will bow before the temple of thy holiness. Now, a temple is not in itself holy, but the prophet clearly means to designate God himself. As to the ark within the temple, the simplest mind can see it means the Decalogue, for every one knows that the ark contained the two tables on which the Commandments were inscribed ; and these two tables, containing the good and true, gave the name, The Ark of the Covenant. If all these proofs are not sufficient to convince you that St John, in the two chapters we have just discussed, meant to exhibit those two all-important doctrines—the recognition of our Lord as such, and the obligation to live according to his laws—I know not what further arguments to adduce. In my opinion, nothing has been strained, nothing arbitrarily assumed. But perhaps you would rather hold, with Bossuet, that by the court of the temple is meant the Pagans, who are unworthy of being counted or measured by God ? Will you take the forty-two months, or 1260 days, for the period of the persecution of the Church ? and the beast of the bottomless pit who killed the witnesses, for Diocletian, who killed the martyrs, called witnesses because they bore witness to the truth ? And when they ascend to heaven, will you, with the Bishop of Meux, see in this the glory of the Church under Constantine ? and in the seven thousand slain, the victory of this prince over Maximus ? Lastly, do you prefer seeing in the temple of God the Church opened to the Gentiles, and in the Ark of the Covenant the revealing of Christian mysteries ?

MYSELF.—Oh, we are in no danger of believing that, for the mysteries exist still. And in all things I am ready to follow your theories in preference to those of Bossuet. However, I have enough to think of for the present ; more minute details would escape my memory, so let us postpone further discussion till the morrow.

CHAPTER IX.

Rev., chaps. xii. xiii.

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, AND THE TWO BEASTS.

EUGENE.—We left St John yesterday with the temple and tabernacle, repeating under another image those fundamental truths of religion which the two witnesses had already proclaimed so loudly. In the passage we are now about to consider, the Apostle's thoughts being fixed on the Church, for whom this truth is destined, he naturally sees the strife it has to endure with infernal falsehood. It is thus that I read the emblem of the woman who brings forth a son, and that of the dragon who seeks to devour her offspring. Elsewhere we have explained this emblem, and I think the few details that remain will not occupy us long.

THE OFFICER.—The emblematic woman who appeared to St John in heaven—by which is meant, in the spirit world—is described as clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Could the new Church, or the regenerated religious society, be better represented? For is not her garment Divine love, expressed by the sun—her chief attribute faith, typified by the moon—and her possession of all Divine truths figured by the crown of twelve stars? St John adds: She, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. This was the doctrine she was ready to announce; for in the travail of his soul must man accomplish his spiritual regeneration, without which there can exist no Church. Another sign accompanying this is seen by St John—viz., that of a great red dragon. The form is the same as the serpent; the colour signifies the false glow of infernal love; and it has seven heads, to express the totality of perverted intellect; for the head is at once the seat and the symbol of intellect. Seven expresses full celestial holiness, and in the opposite sense entire iniquity. The ten horns signify great power; the diadems on each head the profanation of the literal meaning of the Word. The precious

stones of a diadem arc emblematic of the brilliancy of truth, and so, in an opposite sense, this truth profaned.

MYSELF.—But now, to go into an analysis of your details, tell me why St John, who appears to have clearly seen locusts, horses, and other creatures of this kind, now, when the symbol is so simple, does not say that he had a real perception of it, but merely perceived it as a sign in heaven. This word seems to me to designate something less special than the preceding symbols; it is only a sign. There is no room here to doubt the origin of the visionary's perceptions; still, why is this last vision alone expressly named a sign?

THE OFFICER.—In Scripture, by a sign is expressed the revelation of future things. What preceded were not signs, but events passing in the spiritual world at that moment before the eyes of the extatic, though distant as regards time. Here the sign is given, to shew what will follow these events. It is an anticipated view of a future not yet unfolded to his eyes. Isaiah says: Make us understand what will happen; shew us the signs of what will come to pass. The disciples ask Christ: What will be the sign of thy coming? You see, therefore, that the common idea of the ancients, that the future was revealed to man by signs, resulted from a tradition of extatics; for it is only in the spiritual world that signs can be given. Divination, auguries, presages, had their origin merely in the communications made by visionaries. Thus, the woman and the dragon were not spiritual beings, but signs. The least change of state bringing a change in the scene that surrounds the extatic, you can understand how some of their impressions are manifested as real events, while others appear only as a distant view of future things.

EUGENE.—What a strange world is this of the extatics!—to keep our heads from being completely confused, we must be content to see it as it is, and not endeavour, fruitlessly, to compare it with our own world. Such an endeavour is only calculated to bewilder and unsettle our ideas; but, judged by its peculiar laws, we receive everything as belonging to an order of ideas and sensations perfectly distinct from ours, but in harmony with itself. In our world, time and matter are essential elements; but where these have no existence, I can imagine impressions or objects succeeding each other as rapidly as our thoughts themselves.

A careful study of the human mind is necessary to teach us how to judge of these apparitions. Without this aid, we should allow ourselves to be carried away unthinkingly; and when reason and judgment resumed their sway, we should reject the whole as a mere dream of the fancy; hence it arises that unreflecting admiration is so often followed by an equally unreflecting and unfounded disgust.

Now proceed, if you please. The woman is with child ; for, in fact, a doctrine is conceived and carried in the understanding and the will before it is manifested in form or act. Christ says : Unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

THE OFFICER.—Natural birth is the most exact type of spiritual birth. Isaiah says : Sing, thou barren woman that hast brought forth. Samuel, describing the Gentiles, designates them under the emblem of a barren woman, and the Jews as a fruitful mother. Sion, saith Isaiah, has brought forth before she conceived.

Ezekiel says, that Sion will conceive, but not be able to bring forth. Jehovah is called, by Isaiah : The former in the womb. Jesus Christ is the re-former. See what light springs from these two terms !

Jehovah established a Church—Christ re-established it. He who produced the work at first, can alone reproduce it a second time. The same operation implies the same God, the absolute Divinity of Christ, and his identity with Jehovah. This grand truth, seen by St John under the emblems of the two witnesses, and the temple in heaven, is everywhere clearly symbolical.

MYSELF.—Well, far from advancing, like the red dragon, to combat so plain a truth, I receive it with my whole heart. But why does the negation of this truth take the form of a dragon to St John's mind ? One hears of these fabulous animals only in the tales and romances of chivalry, and its introduction here is disagreeable to me. A man who is credulous enough, or tasteless enough, to illustrate his discourse with symbols taken from beyond the pale of nature, does not inspire one with much confidence.

THE OFFICER.—Doubtless not ; but an extatic lives in another order of nature, and we must accept the symbol he represents, though it has no existing prototype with us. On earth, no serpent has wings, but in the spiritual world, the serpent recalls a moral idea, to which may be aptly associated a second idea represented by wings. From the union of the two ideas results, necessarily, a monstrous creation, a composite being such as swarm on the monuments of antiquity, and the origin of which no author has yet discovered ; however, our theory throws light on the subject, as well as on many others.

MYSELF.—Your definition is, indeed, most luminous. A thousand times the problem of composite creatures has occupied my attention, but without any satisfactory result. If ideas be forms without matter, and if the impressions of extatics are independent of time, then it is clear that moral ideas may be manifested instantaneously, and form groups express-

ivo of different attributes. Spirits work on ideas without requiring the aid of matter, and can, of course, join, separate, and group them again after a thousand different fashions. Dupuis attributes the invention of composite creatures to that custom of the ancients of giving extra-zodiacal constellations the attributes of those connected with the zodiac by their relation to the meridian. But that is not probable; for the twelve zodiacal constellations, which must have been named first, and before all others, present many composite symbols. Thus, Capricorn is half fish, half animal; Sagittarius at once a man and a horse. Your theory, however, explains all these monstrous representations of antiquity. But tell me, has this emblem of a dragon, employed by St John to denote the fierce antagonism of infernal falsehood to the good and true, been ever used elsewhere?

THE OFFICER.—Without doubt. Scripture speaks the same language everywhere on this point, and always denotes the devastation of the Church by this fierce symbol. Jeremiah says: I will change Jerusalem into ruins, that it become the dwelling of dragons. Now, as no dragons exist in Judea, and yet this image is used frequently by the prophets, it is evident that dragons of the spiritual world must be meant. Isaiah says: His bed is in the dwelling of dragons; and the Psalmist exclaims: You have thrust us into the den of dragons. In Micah, we read that Jehovah delivered the heritage of Esau to the dragons of the desert. The emblem, therefore, is, you see, not arbitrary. It has descended to us from the primitive language, and we cannot refuse to receive it. As to the seven heads, it is a fearful image of the totality of evil, which even fable has consecrated; for if antiquity rejoiced in the harmonies of the seven-chorded lyre, it shrink back in equal horror from the bark of the seven-headed Cerberus.

EUGENE.—That seems all very lucid; but first tell me the meaning of the seven diadems. Do not jewels and precious stones seem rather incongruous in the spirit world?

THE OFFICER.—Not at all, since they exist in your thoughts, your sensations, and in your memory.

We have imagined nothing more worthy wherewith to ornament the head of kings than these very jewels; and could the extatic, think you, have named anything more fitted to symbolise celestial truths than those brilliant stones, which reflect every ray of light? We have seen, elsewhere, that a stone was the emblem of truth; the precious stone, therefore, means Divine truth; and these glittering ornaments, arranged as a diadem on the brow, cannot be anything else than the natural symbol of Divine truth adorning the wisdom that has adopted it. Error has the privilege of wearing the ornaments of truth, and a diadem may glitter as brightly on the brow of crime

and dishonour as of virtue. See what a terrible splendour is given to vice by the jewels bought with the loss of innocence and modesty. The seven heads of the dragon, therefore, are made still more fearful by this ornament. Even had it no meaning there, a painter would have placed it for effect.

MYSELF.—Well, but this terrible dragon's tail that swept away the third part of the stars from heaven, what means it?

THE OFFICER.—The stars symbolise knowledge or acquirements; when these are detached from heaven, and fallen to earth, all truth is lost for man, for they have no existence unless linked with heaven. In the dust of the world absolute truth is not to be found. By "the third part," is always meant the entire, as applied both to truth and falsehood. Thus, infernal falsehood destroys all truth within man, and in fact, when you persuade him that all which proceeds from his understanding and his will has no effect upon his salvation, what truths do you leave him? Have you not cast down the knowledge by which man unites himself to God, his Creator? If neither my thoughts nor my actions are of any consequence in religious matters, what mark have I that I am a recipient of God? My good works—if, indeed, the works of the natural man can be good—place me in conjunction with the world, but in no way unite me with God; for me, literally speaking, the stars have fallen from heaven. Daniel saw, likewise, in a vision, a he-goat whose horn cast down the stars to the ground; and, that none may doubt the meaning of the figure, the prophet adds: He cast down the truth to the ground. You see, therefore, that St John has only produced a natural image here; I mean an image according to the nature of extatics. We have now arrived at the verse where the dragon stands before the woman to devour her child. And is it not true that confirmed error is always eager to destroy truth?

Present it, and with a dragon's ferocity error will seek its destruction. Falsehood desires to reign. How, then, will it permit another to assume the highest place? Error is never indifferent to the triumph of virtue, but hates it with a vigorous hate, and on earth, as well as in the spirit world, which St John describes, seeks to stifle it the moment of its birth.

MYSELF.—So it has been at the origin of all Divine doctrine. At the birth of the Jewish Church, have we not seen Moses escaping by a miracle from the proscription pronounced upon all male children of the Hebrews? and the conduct of Herod at the birth of Christ bears a singular resemblance to the narrative of St John. The child of this woman clothed with the sun is a male child, and the dragon seeks to devour it, as Pharaoh and Herod sought to destroy Moses and Christ, two male children likewise. To escape from the proscription, the

virgin mother of our Lord flies into Egypt ; and, to escape the pursuit of the dragon, the woman of the Apocalypse flies away into the desert. These three doctrines had therefore three similar beginnings.

THE OFFICER.—And consequently St John has invented nothing. The third religious epoch, which comes to console the universe, disinherited of its belief, has the same origin as the others. I have only two or three words to add to your developements. You understand clearly that by a male child is specially designated a doctrine. The truth of a doctrine is the fruit of the understanding, which is the special masculine faculty. As the woman symbolises the Church, her son is plainly the truth which forms the foundation of it. In Scripture, a male child is always the symbol of truth. Thy sons, Jerusalem, have perished, exclaims Isaiah ; their bodies lie at the corners of the streets. Our Lord calls the good seed the sons of the kingdom. But, when the prophets talk of the daughters of Sion, of Judah, or of Israel, the Church as regards the affections is meant evidently. This male child is to govern the nations with a rod of iron : which signifies the Word according to the letter. The child caught up to God means clearly that truth finds an asylum in heaven, despite of the vain persecutions of men. The woman flying into the desert, as Mary into Egypt, marks the small number of followers gained over to each doctrine at its first promulgation. Is not the great theatre of the world a desert to nascent truth ? Where will it find upholders until the great and mighty amongst the nations adopt it as their own ?

EUGENE.—In truth, it is a complete moral history. The emblems speak for themselves. The place prepared by God for the woman, and where she is to be nourished for 1260 days, is the state in which she is to rest, nourished by Divine truth, until the close of the ancient religion, and the beginning of the new, as we have already seen. Now we can proceed without help.

THE OFFICER.—I was just speaking of the desert to which the woman fled, when you interrupted me. The truth of the expression is not merely in accordance with the metaphoric style ; it is also in accordance with Scripture. A Church without truth is invariably designated a desert. Who is the mighty man, Isaiah asks, that has changed the universe to a desert ? Jeremiah says : I saw Carmel a desert ; and Ezekiel : The vine has been planted in the desert. The day of Jehovah has come, exclaims Joel ; before him the earth is like the garden of Edon ; behind him it is a desolate wilderness—that is, when the Lord is with the Church, she lives ; when he withdraws, she perishes.

Lastly, you are aware that St John, when preaching the

new kingdom, at the close of the Jewish Church, went about everywhere, saying—The voice of one crying in the wilderness. When the prophets wish to describe the revival of religion, they say that the desert shall be watered with living water, and flourish with every kind of tree. I shall make a path in the desert, says Jehovah, speaking by the mouth of Isaiah. Jehovah, says the same prophet, shall change the desert into a garden of Eden. You see, in all these expressions, the emblems of the decay and renovation of doctrines. Why, then, should you think St John means anything else but the close of one Church and the commencement of another?

MYSELF.—That is incontestable; but at present, the extatic leaves the woman, to behold another prodigy—a combat in heaven between Michael and the dragon. This happened, we are told, at the revolt of the evil angels. St John, therefore, abandons the future, and returns upon the past.

THE OFFICER.—There is neither past nor future to the extatic. Thus, St John does not leave one mode of time for another—he perceives both together, though his narrative can only proceed in the ordinary manner. Let us follow him, therefore.

Having seen, as in a picture, the apparition of the new Church come to cleanse the spiritual world from the impurities we beheld in the preceding chapter, St John asks, within himself, as you have done: Who is this dragon, this redoubtable enemy who threatens to stifle the Church at its birth, or persecute it afterwards? And a second picture is his answer, in which is retraced the primitive struggle of the false against the true, after the manner in which extatics see all immaterial truths—that is to say, by images. He beholds, then, the combat of the good and evil angels, united into two collective beings—one under the figure of Michael, the other under that of the dragon.

EUGENE.—Oh, what an admirable poem! After having seen the future, St John sees, in the past, the causes which primitively brought good and evil into the world; and by this second scene the Lord seems to say to him: Thou wishest to know what is this red dragon that menaces the Church; lift up thine eyes, and I will tell thee. Then naturally is retraced the first combat between the false and the true: he sees the dragon warring against Michael, which is clearly meant to shew him that this monster is none other than he who originally tempted man in the fall.

THE OFFICER.—That is so true, that St John, describing the victory of Michael, says: The dragon is that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world.

If any doubt this, it can only be those whose conformation unfits them to receive moral evidence.

MYSELF.—In truth, there can be no dispute on the point. After having seen the evil in the spiritual world, St John sees the good that is to follow it ; and, in order to convince him that the new Church will be in all things conformable to the primitive type, he is shewn the latter warring with that ancient enemy of truth, whom the Bible designates a murderer from the beginning ; and in this enemy he recognises the dragon.

Here are good and evil still struggling at the end of the Church, even as they appeared in the beginning, according to the most ancient of traditions, and thus in the Apocalypse is exhibited the whole scene of human vicissitudes, submitted to that imperious law which pronounces that all is born to end, and all ends to be re-born again. The day that dies is the pledge of the aurora of the morrow. The sun of December has no sooner ended his course, than that of June commences its career. How full of beauty is the Apocalypse, considered thus !

THE OFFICER.—The physical world is the emblem of the moral world. Day, you say, succeeds to day ; in the same manner Church succeeds to Church. When the shadows are darkest on the earth, morning is not far off.

The primitive revelation to which Moses, St Jude, and St Peter allude, depicted the struggle of truth and error by the combat of good and evil angels. When these last were vanquished by Michael, a new Church arose. That was the Adamic Church, whose history occupies the first chapter of Genesis. There we see its birth, downward progress, and its final fall, which is consummated in the deluge. The false having prevailed, it was necessary, in order to restore equilibrium, to have it drowned in the stormy ocean of man's insensate errors.

The Noachian Church then fell in its turn ; that to which Heber gave his name succeeded, and continued to exist until the advent of the Lord. The Church which Christ founded having likewise become corrupted, Divine justice fitly superseded it by another. Christ's Church was announced by the prophets, and the new Church has its prophet also. Now, as all things are repeated in the world's history, it is quite natural that St John should see the combat between truth and error in the Christian Church under the same symbols that a similar combat has been represented to us by ancient tradition.

MYSELF.—You say that Michael is a collective being, figuring the true warring against the false. Consequently he is the emblem of our Lord. Now, as God was typified by the sun in ancient cosmogonies, I am not astonished to see Michael endowed with the attributes of Hercules, who, as every one knows, was the sun personified.

Hercules wore a lion's skin on his shoulders, and Origen remarks that the Eastern Christians represented Michael with

the head of this animal. Hercules slew the Lernean Hydra, and the celestial sphere shews us even now the constellation of Hercules with the feet resting on the head of the boreal dragon. The feast of the archangel, who has been canonised as a saint, is celebrated in September, the epoch of the rising of the celestial Hercules. In fact, the two heroes resemble each other as closely as the two enemies overthrown by them. Therefore we may conclude that both one and the other are identical. The Greck Hercules is the image of the sun, conqueror of darkness and fogs. The archangel Michael is consequently the type of the moral sun of the Eternal Word, which has banished evil and falsehood from the heart of man. In a word, the sun, Hercules, and St Michael, are all types of God. I am enchanted with these wonderful resemblances.

THE OFFICER.—Which I shall convert into certainties. Michael is so perfect a type of the Lord, that throughout Scripture he is used to represent the dogma of the Divine humanity, and the necessity of a life in accordance with his precept.

Daniel acknowledges to have received his revelations on this subject from him. I will proclaim, he says, all that is written in the Scriptures of truth, and none has helped me in these things but Michael, your prince. Now we saw, when discussing the open book mentioned in the preceding chapter, that the Divine humanity was the truth it contained. And Daniel continues: At the time that Michael the prince shall stand up, thy people shall be delivered, every one that is found written in the book. Michael, therefore, is he who manifests both the book and the truth which it contains. Nothing, surely, seems obscure to you now, and you may join your voice with that heard by St John after the defeat of the dragon.

EUGENE.—This picture seen in the air by St John is a beautiful allegory, which you see has passed away, after having explained to him the meaning and nature of the red dragon. This monster, therefore, cast down to earth from the spirit world, still continues to persecute the woman—that is to say, the prophet again takes up the thread of his narrative, which had been interrupted by this vision, inwoven with the principal vision as an episode in a poem. It is impossible for anything to be more natural or more probable.

But in the canticle that follows, there is an expression at which I must pause. It is said of those who conquered evil that they renounced the love of life even unto death. Bos-suet, who thinks this canticle a thanksgiving for the peace enjoyed by the Church under Constantine, very naturally, I think, fell into the error of supposing that the phrase I have quoted refers to the voluntary sacrifice of the martyrs under Diocletian.

THE OFFICER.—The Apocalypse speaks here of a much more universal sacrifice, that of *self*, by which man, renouncing the numerous bonds that attach him to life, makes the noble sacrifice of his being, by the annihilation of self—an indispensable sacrifice, and without which the Holy Spirit can never take up his dwelling within us. Our natural instinct is to love ourselves, and ourselves alone. Now, to suffer death, means to extinguish in us this instinctive desire to that point where sublime devotion for the general good takes the place of our private interest.

EUGENE.—How immeasurably above Bossuet is that solution! What profound philosophy in St John!

THE OFFICER.—Say, rather, what profound philosophy in the Holy Scripture! for everywhere it confirms the Apocalypse. He who loves his life shall lose it, says the Gospel; and he who hates it in this world shall preserve it for eternity. And does not Christ say, that whoever comes to Him must deny himself?

MYSELF.—How beautiful, and how true! And Bossuet thought to explain all this by the petty events of this world! How miserable seems his theory, compared with that founded upon a perfect knowledge of the human heart! What does he say of the male child? Does he ever suspect it to signify the understanding, the perception of the true?

EUGENE.—Oh, nothing of the kind; he looks on it merely as a strong child, to typify man; but, in truth, his puerilities are not worth repeating. Let us finish our chapter. The dragon cast down to earth still pursues the woman who had brought forth the man-child, upon which she takes two wings of a great eagle, and flees away to the desert, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time. The new-born Church, exposed to the persecution of the wicked, leaves the world to darkness, and flies on the wings of intellect to the hearts of the wise, where it remains until the end of the Dragonic Church, and the commencement of that called by St John the New Jerusalem. This, at least, is my solution.

THE OFFICER.—And it is excellent. A time, times, and half a time, is the same thing as the 1260 days of which we have spoken before. Daniel uses a similar expression, and talks of a time, times, and the half of a certain time. St Luke speaks of a famine that lasted, he says, three years and six months. Everywhere you see the same emblem, and the signification rigorously exact. Observe how Scripture always confirms Scripture.

MYSELF.—Are you aware that the virgin of the zodiac is represented as winged, like that of St John? Arnaut says in his poem that she flew far away from mortals at the commencement of the brazen age, when the giants, whom fable

paints with dragons' feet, entered into the world. Is not St John's history written also by primitive revelation? Observe, too, that the circumstance of the virgin flying away to the desert, leads the same poet to give her the appellation of *solitary*. Read the history of Themis in pagan legend, and you will have no doubt that the monuments of antiquity dimly shadow beforehand what is afterwards seen fulfilled in the Apocalypse. The same events have been revealed under different forms to various extatics, at different epochs of the world. That being settled, I shall amuse you by quoting an example of Dupuis' mania for leaving nothing unexplained. He says the wings of the constellation named the Eagle were taken from it in order to decorate the virgin, in accordance with that method I have already stated to you, which consists in giving to one constellation the attributes of another that rises and sets at the same time, or which rises when the other sets, or when the other rises. What sad waste and abuse of erudition!

EUGENE.—We have now come to the last scene of the chapter. The dragon, or serpent, casts a flood of water out of his mouth after the woman; but the earth helps her, and swallows up the flood. Here I am quite at fault.

MYSELF.—I would say that at the moment the constellation of Virgo rises in the east, the eastern flood sets in the west; at least Dupuis states that is the meaning of the flood cast after her by the dragon.

EUGENE.—But, my friend, that is rather a confused solution. A constellation that sets in the west must precede that which rises in the east. How, then, could it cast anything after the symbolic woman?

MYSELF.—Dupuis states it; that is all I meant to affirm. Take a globe, however, and you will see that after Virgo rises, the head of the serpent appears; and at the opposite horizon Eridan sets. Now, may not this flood have been cast forth by the serpent? It has not attained its object, certainly, but has done more—overshot the mark. The earth which swallows the water is the intervening horizon, which hides all the constellations.

EUGENE.—Truce to your absurdities, and let our wise commentator speak.

THE OFFICER.—The symbolic flood is already known to us. It means an overflowing of errors—the insensate reasonings of those who always are found persecuting nascent truth. The earth which swallows the flood is the true Church absorbing and annihilating all the vain attempts of human pride; for, observe, my friends, throughout all epochs, human reason, enlightened from on high, has conquered vain sophisms and silly declamations. Vice and error are but accidental states; they

never permanently retain human reason in their power, for within it exists always the undying germ of morality. Humanity, enlightened by God, or, in other words, the Church—for that is its proper name—has always given Truth the same help which the earth here offers to the woman. You will, I have no doubt, at once see the truth and justice of this solution of the metaphor; and so we may pass on to the next chapter, which has occupied commentators so much.

St John sees a beast with seven heads and ten horns rising from the sea, and upon the horns ten diadems, and upon the heads the names of blasphemy. This beast resembles the other somewhat, and in fact, like it, represents a collective being. Only in the spiritual world are such objects enumerated—a society appearing under the form of an individual.

MYSELF.—Like the Jewish people, represented frequently in the Scriptures as appearing, walking, rising, like an individual man.

THE OFFICER.—Just so; and when society is plunged in falsehood and vice, it takes the form of a monster such as we have here. The preceding beast had crowns on the head, to denote the falsification of intellect; this bears the diadem upon its horns; for it is not false reason, but extensive power, which is here represented as being crowned. The beast, therefore, expresses that collection of individuals who hold the absurd dogma of faith alone being sufficient for salvation. Farther on, we shall see the body that teaches and makes this multitude speak, under the form of another beast.

EUGENE.—Thus you would say that the two beasts represent the clergy and laity of Protestantism—rather a contracted meaning for the emblem, perhaps, yet one which is confirmed by the fathers. The fault is not yours. Churchmen have often rather limited ideas. The whole human race is considered by them as divided but into two classes—laity and ecclesiastics.

THE OFFICER.—This division seems ludicrous to you only; because you forget that the truest and noblest distinction of a man is union with his Author, and bestow too much importance upon the insignificant categories under which the whole great human family is ordinarily ranged.

In God's sight, the entire human race must seem but one collective being produced from the Eternal Essence, and destined to return into it again; and, therefore, the highest aim of humanity is progression towards this final union with its Eternal Original. Once admit this view, and you will see that the two most important classes into which men can be divided are those who teach the way of union, and those who follow it. See, my friends, how, in rising above the prejudice of designations, we learn to consider things under their true aspect.

And this aspect being the one under which St John contemplated human society, he naturally beheld only sheep and shepherds ; or, if both are plunged in evil, two beasts, one more terrible than the other. If this be not the true solution, we must despair of finding one.

We shall commence now by examining the image which represents the people ; or, to speak more exactly, the laity, if this word does not make you smile. The beast rises from the sea ; now the sea is the external Church, into which has been received the great community of men who have not penetrated, like divines, into the inner truths of religion. The sea, the emblem of all truth and error, designates universal perceptions, as the ocean is the recipient of all rivers.

MYSELF.—Before proceeding, I wish to make one observation. People look upon these beasts of the Apoccalypse as absurd creations, forgetting that it is not the only book in which beasts are spoken of as emblems of the affections and thoughts of men. Scripture everywhere sanctions the use of symbols, and man is never described except under the image of some animal or other. But I think St John has substituted the word beast for that of animal, employed more frequently elsewhere.

THE OFFICER.—The word is used in many places of Scripture, in the Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the prophets ; and presently, you will see that the beast described by Daniel has many points of resemblance with that of the Apoccalypse. I quoted before a passage of St Mark, where it is said that Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness with the wild beasts. You know that this means he was alone with the evil passions he had come to combat, and which appeared in the spiritual world under the form of beasts. It is common to see demons under the form of beasts, and the notion of thus representing them had its origin from the visions of extatics.

MYSELF.—I find also that in the primitive revelation, wherein so many types of the Saviour existed, this symbol has not been neglected.

All those who have come down to us as civilisers of men, as teachers of the way of regeneration, seem, like Christ, to have passed the apprenticeship of their rude Apostolate in the desert with the wild beasts. Orpheus lived amongst them, and tamed them, it is said, with the sound of his lyre. Does not that symbolise the victory won by the Redeemer over hell ? The lyre of Orpheus, like that of David, had the power to banish demons ; so the Word of the Lord made them fly, or, subduing these wild beasts or unregenerate men, brought them meekly to the feet of the Lamb.

What wondrous types, my dear friends, in profane antiquity ! It is the mirror that reflects sacred antiquity ; but Time has

set his foot thereon, and we can only see the image through the scattered and broken fragments.

THE OFFICER.—The crowns have the same signification as the crowns upon the seven heads of the dragon ; but, in addition, the beast here bears the name of blasphemy, because when the people—the multitude—adopt certain doctrines, they assume a definite consistence—in fact, receive a name. Now the doctrine symbolised by this image is the denial of the two fundamental truths of Christianity—in a word, blasphemy ; for you cannot doubt that the dragon and the beast are meant to typify the same religious error. Indeed St John tells us in the second verse that the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority.

EUGENE.—Nothing can be more evident ; but tell us now why this beast, like a leopard, has the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. The extatic theory which explains so admirably these monsters—these composite beings—makes it easy to understand the marvellous union of three beings in one ; but to enable us to see the signification of the entire, we must learn the value of each figure separately.

THE OFFICER.—The leopard, with his spotted skin of white and black, paints exactly the confused mixture of truth with error.

MYSELF.—Oh, that is almost as bad as Bessuet. Give us a more solid reason.

THE OFFICER.—You require reasons drawn from the study of the human heart for the various scenes presented to those in a state of extasis ; but this rule cannot be applied in relation to the objects themselves. Objects have colours ; colour signifies quality ; well, the extatic, struck with the quality of a thing, naturally sees the colour that expresses this quality. To exact a philosophic reason from him, would be to exact a reason for his sensations. I have felt in such a way, he tells you, and I express what I felt by such an image, because, in my language, no other word than that which I have employed would be adequate to describe the impression I received. The extatic uses a certain emblem, but to ask him the reason why he does so, is to suppose that the emblem has been chosen or invented by him—that he is, in fact, acting under the guidance of his own mind ; whereas it seems to me that we should receive the symbol as the fixed correspondent of the idea—in fact, that images are the words of a language created prior to man who uses them.

EUGENE.—That is all clear as the sun at noonday. The leopard, of course, signifies something, like everything else in the world ; for there is no object without a signification, and could there be a signification less arbitrary than the one we have given ? It is a word fixed by general use throughout Scrip-

ture, as well as in the Revelation of St John, to denote a mixture of good and evil.

THE OFFICER.—In Jeremiah we read : Can the leopard change his spots ? meaning, Can you do good who have been reared to do evil ? The same prophet, designating a doctrine by a city, says : The leopard shall prowl among your cities. The beast seen by St John had the feet of a bear, to designate the Word perverted from its true meaning by ignorance. In Jeremiah it is said, that a bear has ravaged the highways of the Lord—a speaking emblem of those who, with a darkened, limited intellect, carry desolation into the consciences of men, by their doctrines deduced by natural reason from a book they do not understand. David—a type of our Lord—conquers a bear, and becomes the symbol of Divine truth destroying the illusions resulting from the uncomprehended literal sense of the Word. Observe, it is said the feet only are those of a bear, to shew the grossness of natural reason ; for the feet typify the extremes ; and the signification is, that the beast rests in this natural reason, which affords it no strength ; and so it is perpetually wandering in illusions and errors, without encountering truth.

MYSELF.—True ; and observe the singular analogy : The celestial bear is placed in the sphere near the pole, and never rests its feet upon the horizon. The ancients even supposed that Thetis had forbidden it to do so ; leaving it, as an emblem of illusion, to revolve unceasingly in the void of air, without ever finding a resting-place.

THE OFFICER.—Lastly, the mouth of the lion signifies the doctrine to which falsehood gives its strength. The lion typifies power in good as well as evil ; and the mouth is the natural hieroglyphic of truth as of falsehood. We say commonly, eloquent lips, a lying mouth. Besides, this singular image has not been seen merely by St John. Daniel relates that he saw four beasts rising from the sea ; the first like a lion, the second like a bear, and the third like a leopard. The fourth had neither a name nor determinate figure. Now, you have a good illustration here of the perceptions of an extatic. Daniel beheld the vision as *separate* beasts, St John as one *composite* creature. Without doubt, the impressions received in one case were successive, in the other simultaneous. No other mode of explanation is possible.

MYSELF.—Dupuis explains it by the method of Paranatellons, which is the name he gives to that theory of rising and setting of which I have spoken before. If there be anything arbitrary in the solutions given, it is to be found, certainly, in his theory rather than in yours. Explain now this other image about which so much has been said, and

which every commentator explains differently—I mean that of the head wounded to death, and afterwards healed.

THE OFFICER.—The seven heads signify the *totality* of intellect; one of them, considered apart, is not like a unit taken from the number, but as the most striking part of the entire. Now, in the creed of a dead faith, erected into a dogma, there is no concordance with the Divine Word, in which alone life is to be found. This creed strikes with death those heads or people who receive and profess it. In other words, as extatics apply the ideas and images of death to all that departs from the precepts of spiritual life, St John could only describe a creed contrary to that life under the image of a dead conception. If he sees the head healed afterwards, it is to express that God has drawn good out of evil, and has thus afforded a means of safety; this means is, that, according to the creed spoken of, the redemption has taken away the curse of the law, which no one could fulfil; and that, henceforth, by endeavouring to apply to themselves the merits and justice of Christ, his passion and sufferings cleanse the believers from their sins.

EUGENE.—But this is a great error on their part, for the merits of Christ is but a metaphorical form of speech, seeing that between Him and the Father there is but a logical distinction. And even were it real, the merits of a third party cannot save a man who is under the absolute necessity of cleansing and purifying himself; therefore such a dogma is not a cure, but merely a palliation.

THE OFFICER.—God can always produce good from evil. When we fall into the pit, he follows, and gives us means of egress suited to our weakness. God does not heal, but places every one in a position to heal himself. There is no den of vice, however dark at the bottom, in which you cannot perceive some ray of God's providence. He does not approve of the evil, but changes it into a lesser evil, without interfering with our liberty. It is thus, for example, he tolerates the superstitious beliefs so prevalent over the globe, because some dogma is always united with them as a preservative against complete spiritual death. He makes our wildest passions often prompt us to actions that turn to the advantage of mankind. He takes pity on our errors, doubtless, but he prevents them reaching that point of criminal profanation and excess which would render them inexpiable. Even when these unfortunate, whose creed is a dead faith, declare that works do not justify, and consequently nothing keeps them from the lowest pit (action, which alone strengthens and nourishes spiritual life, being disowned), still they are permitted by God to cling, as if by a thread, to Him who can save; and, linking themselves to that chain by which the Redeemer unites earth to heaven, to live suspended, half dead or stupified, over total

destruction. Yet better so than to live without a single spiritual principle whatever, under the mere impulse of their natural passions. This feeble, vacillating reason, depraved in its very nature, never can comprehend absolute good ; better, therefore, to leave it passive in religious matters, and save man by an obscure faith, until the light of a sublimer and truer can dawn upon him in the spirit world.

MYSELF.—And perhaps, if God had not permitted this blindness, these men would have shaken off the authority of the Divine Word, having already got rid of the yoke of the law. Now, at least, they are unable to profane it, profanation requiring beforehand a certain knowledge and study of the subject which, alas ! it afterwards rejects. The deadly wound given to the beast was the fruit of the evil doctrine itself. The subsequent palliative is the life of the docile flock, who, while asserting, with its pastors, that faith alone saves, still perform good works in hope of salvation. I know many good Protestants who say with the mouth that faith alone justifies, and who yet shew many other virtues in their conduct beside this barren faith. They are generous, benevolent, friends of truth ; and all that, notwithstanding the teaching of their theologians that works are unnecessary ; and so the wound in the beast's head becomes healed.

What strange appearances theological ideas assume in the other world ! enough almost to excite a smile on first perusal. On reflection, however, we perceive that there is nothing incongruous in the idea of a relation between man and God assuming a definite form, and possessing characteristic features which plainly shew that it refers to that portion of the Church called the Laity. Further, it is evident that these good people adopt a dogma that inflicts a deadly wound upon themselves, but that this evil is palliated by the fact that their actions contradict their principles.

Luther rejected works in order to place a decided barrier between him and the Roman Church. The head of the flock was struck with vertigo ; but the sheep, forgetting this dogma, or acting, unconsciously, in opposition to it, have nullified the evil guidance of their leader.

EUGENE.—And as error in religious matters always alienates us from God, and interrupts in some manner our relations with him, so the fault of the leader has a tendency to bring death upon his followers. Let us now examine the meaning of this admiration which all the earth testifies for the beast, and the hymn which they sing to its honour.

THE OFFICER.—By all the world is meant the Church ; for St John sees nothing else but the Church and its dogmas here. The members of this Church are represented, you will understand, as glorifying and applauding themselves upon their

institutions and doctrines. They are therefore said by St John to worship the dragon, which means that they regard their doctrine as holy, for it is this which is meant by worship.

Then a mouth was given to the beast, speaking blasphemies ; because each discourse upholding this doctrine was filled with falsehoods ; and power was given also to make war upon the saints forty and two months. The saints signify all good and true things ; the forty-two months, making three years and a half, denote the entire of one determinate period, and the commencement of another. Observe that the word saint is not used here without a meaning, as the fitting antithesis to those who reject the law and the Decalogue ; for amongst the Jews it was the strict observation of legal precepts that entitled men to the name of saints. In Leviticus it is said : They who live according to the precepts of Jehovah are the saints. The Decalogue, you know, is called the *Covenant* ; and in Exodus, it is said : If they observe the Covenant, they are holy (or saints). The place of the Ark, also, wherein lay the book of the law, was called the Holy of Holies—(the Saint of Saints).

MYSELF.—Whenever you quote Scripture, I am content ; but I must confess that, although I approve of your applications of the text to Protestants, yet there seems to me, all the time, something false and strained in the explanation, so that one moment I believe, and the next I doubt. I can see that the literal translation of each emblem is exact ; but the applications you have given them, are they exact likewise ? Are you not prejudiced in some degree against these poor Protestants, that you see them everywhere in the Apocalypse ? When I picture to myself St John writing the history of Calvin and Luther, I confess my brain reels, and I am ready to take my hat and wish you a good-morning.

EUGENE.—I feel the same. You are infecting me with your scepticism.

THE OFFICER.—What do you really think St John could have had in view when writing this history ? The constellations, perhaps ? or the Roman emperors ?

MYSELF.—No, truly. But is it not better, perhaps, to acknowledge at once that we know nothing about it ?

THE OFFICER.—Well, first I ask you to admit that the grand object ever before the eyes of God and his prophets is the Church.

MYSELF.—Certainly ; and the writings of the Jewish prophets form the history of their Church, and that which was to succeed it.

THE OFFICER.—St John's object in writing was also to give the history of his Church, and of that which should succeed. I adopt your own expressions. In fact, read the whole series

of ecclesiastical events—the only real events from St John's time till now—and what do you find ? Two great communions distinctly marked out—the Roman and the Protestant. Whatever has a real existence in time, must have existed also in the extasis of St John, since it embraced all time. You must agree to that. Now, it seems absurd to you that events so near our own epoch should be spoken of eighteen hundred years ago by St John ; but, my dear friends, this is a mere prejudice ; the Jews were equally averse to looking upon the Christian Church as that foretold ages back by their prophets. We can scarcely even comprehend that we ourselves are witnesses of some great era ; but, as events must happen in some one moment or another, the refusal of contemporaries to acknowledge the fulfilment of a prediction in their own time is of no consequence. Posterity will affix a date to the fulfilment of the Apocalyptic prophecies, as we have done to those of Isaiah ; and then those Protestants and Romanists who have passed away from the present, will appear very naturally to symbolise barren Faith, and the spirit of Domination ; or, if you like it better, the Philistines and Chaldeans, for these two ancient societies exactly represent ours. Suppose yourselves existing two thousand years after the era of the Romanist and Reformerist, and you will see the question in its true light.

EUGENE.—Well, doing so, and supposing that the Apocalyptic events are taking place now, I see between the age of Nero and our own but two communions distinctly marked ; the Idolatrous—that is to say, the communion which represents God as a man, dwelling amongst them ; and that other which always Protested against this dogma, and finally united, towards the close of the sixteenth century, under a name now familiar to all the world. To these two communions, therefore, I apply, without repugnance, all the Apocalyptic announcements, seeing that there is nothing *improbable* in allusion being made to them.

Our incredulity, in fact, does not arise from any unreasonableness in your system of interpretation, but simply from the strangeness of meeting Protestants in the Apocalypse. Yet the Protestants of the time of the Reformation fancied they beheld the Romanists clearly in the Revelation ; and the Romanists on their side fancied they beheld their antagonists there. Cannot we, therefore, who are sufficiently unprejudiced to judge both dispassionately, say calmly to each communion : Yes, you are right ; both of you are represented here. You need not deny it ; none but you have formed the Church since St John's age ; and as this Apostle wrote the history of the Church, all his visions must concern you. In fact, this is so clear, that only disingenuousness, ignorance, or prejudice, could endeavour to maintain the contrary.

MYSELF.—You are already giving me confidence. Besides, I observe that if once we quit our guide, we shall never find our way out of the Apocalyptic labyrinth. We are in the middle of it now, and in some need of a lantern; but, assuredly, neither Bossuet nor Dupuis can enlighten us on this shadowy path. We have now arrived at the apparition of the second beast—the teaching body of the Church individualised, as we have agreed to take it. What a formidable emblem of the clergy! St John says it had two horns like a Lamb, and spoke as the Dragon. This mixture of Divine power with devilish eloquence is the most singular we have yet met.

THE OFFICER.—This second animal form, this emblem of incomplete moral life, is seen rising from the earth, in opposition to the other who rose from the sea. Now the earth is the ordinary symbol of the Church. One cannot mistake the emblem here; it is the collection of beings forming a Church upon the earth. The inspired author calls the beast, elsewhere, the false prophet; that is, the religious body who teach the false; for prophecy invariably refers to the ministry which God exercises towards men. The lamb's horns denote the power of the Lord, while, to indicate that this power is usurped, the hieroglyphic of the dragon is added to that of the lamb.

The beast speaks like a dragon, St John states; that is, proffers lies. How many do the same, with all the appearance of truth! How many usurp the outward sign of innocence and good faith, while their impure mouth vomits forth calumny and falsehood! Observe, this second beast exercises all the power of the first; is not that to declare, without mystery, that it confirms and upholds the popular dogmas? St John says that this false teacher, to attest his mission, made fire to come down from heaven. The ancients were in the habit of soliciting this test, to denote the Divine approval. To take the Divinity, the supreme Love, the Fire uncreated and eternal, to witness, is not that in some sort to make God descend from heaven to confirm our oaths? Leviticus tells us that offerings accepted by the Divinity were consumed by fire from heaven; which signifies that Divine love received them; and as love appears always to an extatic under the symbol of fire, the offering accepted by God seemed to them burned with fire from heaven. Now let us not forget, my friends, that we are in the spiritual world, where St John sees the two beasts; and the affirmation of the one who calls on Divine love to attest his mission, can only appear to him under the emblem of fire. But this fire is a double emblem, as all the others—it may enlighten and warm, as in the case of Elias; or consume and destroy, as in the case of the sons of Aaron. The beast, continues St John, deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and bade them make an image of the beast that was wounded and

then healed. Is not that saying that it presented to their acceptance the dogma itself, wounded, and then healed of the wound? Every moral idea is represented by an image to the extant, therefore a doctrine must have its definite symbol; and the development of this doctrine, which, with us, is a thing of reasoning, appears to him as the act of fashioning an image of it. We are accustomed every day to personify vice and virtue, and to treat them, not as mere abstractions, but as beings. Nor is it less natural, in my opinion, to represent dogmas after the same manner. Finally, we see this false prophet represented under the appearance of a second beast, giving life to the image of the first beast, that it should speak. Now, what is this which gives life, if it be not the living Word, the sole source of life?

The false prophet therefore gave an appearance of life to his doctrine, by conforming it to Holy Scripture. There is the whole mystery. To give life and speech to the image is, be assured, to bring it into harmony with the Divine Word. Did not Jesus Christ declare that his words were spirit and life? No other source of either exists. And as St John himself repeats this remarkable expression of Christ's in his Gospel, he could have had in view no other source of life for this image of the Apocalypse.

It kills all those who will not worship the image—that is, pronounces on them spiritual condemnation; and is it not thus the clergy of almost all denominations act? The Church is life; and to exclude from the bosom of the Church all those who do not follow its doctrines, is it not to kill them spiritually? Next, we are told that it marks every one on the brow and hand with a certain character—that is, it recognises those only who have this mark as belonging to its communion; and this character is imprinted on the whole man, for the brow denotes Love, and the right hand the power of Intellect.

You remember how the children of Israel were commanded to bind on brow and hand that precept recorded in Deuteronomy: Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and all thy soul—the brow and the hand signifying the entire man.

EUGENE.—Bossuet says, in support of your theory, that amongst the ancients, those who devoted themselves to the worship of the gods bore a mark stamped upon the wrist and forehead. The road is plain now. Once your principal ideas are adopted, the consequences follow naturally. It is said that none can buy or sell unless those who bear the mark or the number of the beast. I imagine that the people alluded to here, like their fellow-bigots in all ages, held that out of their own communion no true doctrines can be taught or learned. To learn truth is in some sort to buy—to teach is to sell. When an interchange of ideas is established amongst men, do we not

speak of a commerce of opinions? It is a received metaphor. After the words buy and sell, we generally meet with something about money, which marks the negotiation as venal; but in the primitive acceptation this is not the signification. To an extatic, intellect is like a bank, open to all. He who teaches, appears to sell, because the assent, proceeding from the heart of his auditor, repays him; and he who receives appears to buy, since he pays in return.

MYSELF.—Is not all that rather too subtle?

THE OFFICER.—Although you cannot at once, perhaps, see the cause of these definitions, yet, on examination, you will find that they are strictly exact, and conformable to Scripture. Isaiah says: Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Ezekiel also: You have amassed treasures in your intellect, by reason of your wisdom. You have multiplied your wealth by commerce. In this sense, too, we must consider that parable of our Lord's respecting the man who went into a far country, and gave his servants so many talents to trade with in his absence. What traffic is loftier than the interchange of ideas? What yields more profit than the communication of thoughts?

MYSELF.—Well, after some little jolting, we are at the end of our journey. Many a time I thought our chariot and its occupants were on the point of being upset; but your doctrine, I see, is not so easily overthrown. Still, we have the greatest difficulty of all before us: I mean this number 666, which, St John says, is the number of a man. Is not one naturally tempted, with Bossuet, to seek a man whose name can be written with three sixes, or by letters equivalent? I have read a hundred commentaries on the subject, but none satisfied me.

THE OFFICER.—On the contrary, you will find this number the least of our difficulties. 666 is formed of six hundreds, six tens, and six units; it is, therefore, the number six applied three times, to the greatest as well as the least object; or, in other words, there is a moral quality expressed in its most comprehensive, as well as its most minute results, by this number. Now the question to determine is the nature of this quality. It is as follows: 6 is the product of 3 multiplied by 2. Three being the sign of complete Truth, the multiplication of it by two—the symbol of Good—signifies the sum of the true and the good; and the number being three times repeated, raises the expression of the true and good to the highest point, so that 666 is said to be the number of a man—that is to say, it symbolises that quality by which man, the recipient of God, can reflect the nature of his Creator with the most perfect completeness. It expresses the fulness of truth and holiness manifested in man. Now, as all emblems

have a dual meaning, and we know, from the nature of the beast, that he was neither in the good nor true, St John characterises him by a last touch of his pencil, in saying that his *number* or *quality* was the full manifestation of evil and falsehood.

EUGENE.—Even if this solution be not true, we must acknowledge that it is a strictly logical result of the principles we admitted in our third interview.

THE OFFICER.—The number 6 is often repeated in Scripture with the sense I have given it. Leviticus tells us that on the tabernacle table the shew-bread was ranged in two piles of six loaves each. In Numbers, we are told of six cities of refuge for the Jewish people. Six water-pots of stone served for the purifying of the Jews. The reed with which the angel in Ezekiel measured the new city was six cubits long. But I could cite numerous instances of the use of the number 6, where it has a mystical signification; and the word *sextuple*, employed by Ezekiel, signifies that which is complete.

EUGENE.—That is all perfectly convincing. Once admit your principle of interpretation, and the whole Apocalypse can be easily read. The doubts which occasionally arise in our minds spring from the old habit of judging from our ordinary earthly sensations, and forgetting the peculiar nature of the spirit world in which the extatic dwells. I agree that Barren Faith and Man Worship have been the two most powerful causes of the decline of religion. The study of the human heart proves the truth of this assertion. Actuated in the commencement by a sentiment of pure and true love, as I remarked indeed myself, we end by believing only in ourselves, and our religion is at last but a philosophical opinion. Now, looking upon society as one individual body, we judge it as we judge a man. If we had kept this view before us, we should not have thought it strange to see the Barren Faith and Man Worship which characterise the two great social bodies, represented to the eyes of a visionary by two terrible living forms. A degraded sentiment requires a degraded image; consequently there is nothing incongruous in St John seeing these great religious communities figured by two monstrous creatures, and performing all which he has described. Their progress in error being spread over centuries on earth, does not startle us as it ought; for, becoming accustomed to moral deformity, we cease to perceive its hideousness; but St John, on the contrary, seeing all the evil contained in them at *one* view, naturally presents it to our eyes in *one* repulsive form. If others are not content with this explanation, let them seek something more probable elsewhere; as for me, I rest in that you have given us.

THE OFFICER.—Ask our learned men the meaning of the

strange composite creatures, which, like those of the Apocalypse, we see figuring upon the monuments of antiquity, and none of them will be able to answer you ; but the theory of extasis explains them quite naturally, and shews us that the apparent absurdity of the subject arises only from those monstrous forms which shock our sight, but which, nevertheless, have their meaning in nature. In this chapter, St John has, in fact, but made an historical statement, of which the following is a summary :—" In the midst of conflicting human opinions arose a barren religion, that gained authority over the whole social body. The deadly principle from which it was derived seemed as if it would condemn to inertia the masses that received it ; but these, resisting, by their natural instinct, the evil consequences calculated to result from it, abandoned the principle, and, without disavowing it, proceeded in the usual road which common reason traces out for man. At this moment society received an impulse from a directing body, who, under the appearance of truth, uttered only lying discourses, sustained by sacrilegious attestations. It dictated laws to the people, pronounced oracles, and introduced into the blessed interchange of ideas the poison of a doctrine characterised by the complete destruction of all truth in matters of dogma, of all good as regards application." Thus, it seems to me, a philosopher would write the history of the Reformation. St John has presented it to us in a picture. It is the mode employed in the spiritual world which he visited, and so that need not surprise us.

MYSELF.—If you translate all the chapters of the Apocalypse in that manner, no one, I think, will refuse to adopt your interpretations.

THE OFFICER.—The attempt would be vain, and I should expect no such results to ensue. No matter how clear the interpretation, prejudice and preconceived systems will prevent its adoption. Our language, whether philosophical or historical, becomes suspected. It was so arranged, they would say, to confirm their own theory. It is impossible to convince people who do not want to be convinced.

By comparison with what you already know, my explanation seems wonderfully clear ; but, not content, you seek now for complete certitude. More than what satisfies myself I cannot give you. Seek it elsewhere. Must seventeen centuries more pass over the human race, new Bossuets and Newtons arise, before you are convinced of the inutility of all mere human efforts ? Our instinctive incredulity is not difficult to characterise ; it has its source in our imperfect education, which makes us mistrust ourselves. The generality of men fear to yield even to the strongest evidence, because a false education has habituated them to think only as others think. The Academies

and the Press must stamp a doctrine with their approbation, before men have the courage to avow it.

With such superstition as regards ideas, it is difficult for any truth to be established on earth. If novel, people will despise it as past, judged, and forgotten. But the light of intellect alone should enable us to distinguish truth from falsehood, as by the light of the star of day we can at once discern the different shades of colours. We do not ask our neighbours to fulfil the functions of our eyes; let it be so with our intellect. Let us place ourselves face to face with the Divinity, forget the prejudices of coteries, the bigotry of caste; let us truly seek to be sincere, not endeavouring to collect arguments, but simply to recognise truth—and I assure you, my friends, if we do that, and trust in our conscience, we shall be enlightened. Apply this rule to our explanation of the Apocalypse, and I feel confident you will not refuse it your approbation. Learn the dictionary of the language in which it is written, and you will find it has a philosophic basis, on which you may lean with confidence. What evidence is required to impress you with the idea of its truth? Moral events conformable to the scenes it pictures? Well, I have traced the analogy for you. Apply the moral events yourselves as I have stated them, and see if they do not perfectly correspond.

MYSELF.—As for me, I am quite disposed to trust in you. But what a singular animal is man! his judgment is never stationary, but always rising or falling like a thermometer, according as caprice acts on it. The Apocalypse proves to me that nothing can be more variable than the deductions of human understanding.

THE OFFICER.—Let us pause upon your comparison, and it will help us to understand the Apocalypse. What is it which makes the difference of degrees in the thermometer?

MYSELF.—Heat makes it ascend, a diminution of heat to descend.

THE OFFICER.—Well; what makes our intellect to ascend is *love*. If powerfully excited, do not our mental powers become more vivid? Our head and heart seem to act together. When some moral truth in the Apocalypse touches the heart, the consent of the reason follows. What we feel we believe. All lawyers know this secret, and direct their efforts to excite the feelings of their auditory, knowing that conviction will follow. So, to come to the application, if the matters of which we treat awaken in you no sympathy, your heart is cold, and your dull, unexcited intellect is ready to reject the food offered for its nourishment. It seems as if mind and heart were twin sisters. When one languishes, the other grows enfeebled likewise. Reflect on what I have said. Read over the Apocalypse

again ; test it by your sympathies and your understanding, and you will not fail to perceive why you instinctively accept some portions and reject others.

EUGENE.—You can read the human heart as well as the Apocalypse, and read it better than a Rochefoucault. And now, on reflection, I remember well that, whenever, during your commentaries, I had a little attack of incredulity, I was at the same time tempted to yawn ; this proves the heart was uninterested. But whenever, on the contrary, I felt the truth of what you uttered, my blood circulated quickly ; in a word, my feelings were excited. So now I know in what frame of mind one should study the Apocalypse, and I shall henceforth mistrust my scepticism.

MYSELF.—You have exactly explained my feelings also. In fact, the word Theology is enough in itself to give one a nausea. How do you think I could listen with interest to discussions about justification, imputation, predestination, and I know not what beside, all those Protestant dogmas, which I thought interred two centuries ago in the dust of our libraries ?

CHAPTER X.

Rev., chaps. xiv. xv. xvi.

THE REAPERS, THE SONG OF PRAISE, AND THE SEVEN VIALS.

THE OFFICER.—Three chapters still remain, my friends, for us to look over, in order to finish that part of the book that concerns faith alone, or faith separated from works. Let us try and discuss them all at this one sitting. Gentler scenes are succeeding to the sombre visions that have passed before our eyes; for the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, opens this chapter: that is enough to tell us that we are in heaven. The Lamb, you know, always signifies Divine humanity. Mount Zion is the celestial land. The Lord is accompanied hither by 144,000 of the elect, who had disappeared from the scene since the seventh chapter. They are the same personages we met before, and therefore need no further explanation.

EUGENE.—What a singular world this of St John's! I thought the vision of the seventh chapter had quite terminated, and here it comes back upon the scene.

MYSELF.—Ah, my friend, though clouds hide heaven from us, it is only for a time. The wind blows, the storm-clouds sink below the horizon, and the sky reappears as we left it. That is all natural. And, without doubt, the mystic heaven of St John may be often darkened by clouds and mists, though it still exists the same, and still reappears again to console us. St John did not devise a tragedy in five acts, with the unities of time and place preserved. He has flung the scenes pell-mell into the drama, even as they appear in nature. Let us continue. St John calls heaven Mount Zion. It is a figure often used by the prophets, similar to Jerusalem, of which there is one in heaven and one on earth.

THE OFFICER.—Jerusalem is the Church, as regards doctrine; Zion the Church, as regards love; thus, again, we recognise the law of duality. These two cities were each built on a mountain, to designate elevation of heart and mind. I shall pass over the emblem of a mountain, for it has already been

discussed. Lift up your eyes to the mountain from whence cometh your help, exclaims the Psalmist. Isaiah, announcing the Messiah, sees him upon a mountain. How beautiful, he says, on the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings ! I may remark, in passing, that the 144,000 had the name of the Lamb, and of his Father, written upon their foreheads. As these are the elect, who have been saved by a belief in revelation, this logical distinction between the Father and Son is again introduced here with great propriety. It is, in fact, simply an attestation that these regenerated souls have arrived at Divine love through Divine wisdom, or the Word ; or, in other words, have reached the Father through the Son. It is their title, their badge of redemption, which can never be lost. After that, a voice from heaven is heard like the voice of many waters. We know already that this image represents to us celestial truth penetrating into the heart. The voice of the God of Israel, Ezekiel says, is like the voice of mighty waters ; and the meaning of the thunder, also, which accompanies this voice, along with the sound of harps, has been explained before.

We are next told of the new song chanted by those elect, a song that none can learn but the 144,000 ; the reason of which is clear. We heard of this song in the fifth chapter, where it signified the recognition of the unity of Christ and his Divine humanity. A new truth, in fact, to man, and one which can only be avowed by those who hold this dogma.

MYSELF.—I think all the emblems are known to us by this time, so let us simply read the text, and if any new difficulty arrests us, we shall pause, and refer to you for an explanation.

THE OFFICER.—Very well : I dare say few will now be met, so I shall proceed to the next verse : These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb.

MYSELF.—Wait, wait ; not so quick. What ! these 144,000 are those only who have remained virgins ! Impossible !

THE OFFICER.—The Church, you know, is always symbolised by a woman. A woman expresses *affection* towards truth and intellect, and this perfectly represents the Church, whose office is to manifest *love* for the truth which proceeds from the Lord. Indeed, through love alone does she gain a just perception of truth. In this sense Ezekiel speaks when he describes two women, born of one mother, who became prostitutes in Egypt ; one called Ahola, which is Samaria ; the other Aholibah, which is Jerusalem. Now it is clear that by these two women are meant two churches. Thus, in the preceding chapter, we saw how the woman, clothed with the

sun, who brought forth the man-child, symbolised the Church producing doctrine. The word is everywhere used as emblematic of affection for truth; and in this sense you must consider the woman alluded to in this verse.

EUGENE.—There is evident truth in what you say; and, after studying human nature attentively, I think I can discover in the female character reason sufficient for woman being selected as the symbol of the Church. First, as a mother, she is a striking hieroglyphic of spiritual birth; then, she has a natural instinct of love towards the true and good, which distinguishes the Church. Do you not see her always guided by the intellect of her husband, and making this intellect the object of her tenderest love? If she is proud of any one quality above another in her husband, it is of his intellect. Tell her he is a good man, and limit yourself to that eulogium, she will think you mean he is a fool, and resent the insult bitterly. I have known women even idolise the most ordinary intellect in their husbands, as if it were something sublime. A man, on the contrary, thinks much more of the goodness and affection of his wife than of her intellect; and if you want to compliment him, never let it be on his wife's talent, but on the qualities of her heart.

MYSELF.—That is well known; and, from all these proofs united, we may fairly believe that the women spoken of by St John are emblems of the Church. He who has not defiled them is he who has not falsified Divine truths; or, to use the metaphor of Ezekiel, he who has not polluted Ahola and Aholibah. To commit adultery, is to falsify Divine truth, to destroy the union, or, if you prefer the word, the marriage, of the good and true. Everywhere, in fact, that adultery and fornication are spoken of in Scripture, the words should be taken in this metaphorical sense, otherwise the Bible must be considered as recording, in many places without a definite purpose, scenes of the grossest sin and vileness, which it is impossible to believe.

THE OFFICER.—Yes, truly; and a passage of Leviticus shews clearly that the fornications spoken of were spiritual. It is said there: I will exterminate the soul that looks upon the Pythons and Diviners to commit fornication with them. Is it not evident that this signifies to commit falsehood, to abuse the power of spiritual communication, granted at that time, by divination and sorceries? Ezekiel, speaking of Jerusalem, reproached her for her fornications with Egypt, Assyria, and Chaldea. Jeremiah, applying this metaphor to idolatry, says that Jerusalem committed adultery with wood and stone; and the same Jeremiah affirms of the prophets of Jerusalem, that they were prone to adultery and walked in falsehood. Thus, adultery is evidently the Scriptural name for the introduction

of false teachings in the Church ; and you will find in the next chapters the Church which has falsified Divine truth designated as the Mother of Harlots. The Undeified are those who have preserved pure in their hearts the doctrines of truth ; they are virgins, adds St John, and see how applicable is the emblem to the idea. If the Woman expresses affection towards the true, the Virgin, who has not yet formed the spiritual marriage, symbolises the pure love of truth for its own sake. How often do we speak of a virgin mind, meaning by this one who receives goodness and truth instinctively, without even being conscious of the existence of evil ! And what a beautiful nature is that ! What purity in the soul that has never loved anything but the truth ! May we not call that a virgin soul—one for whom falsehood has never sullied the atmosphere around ?

EUGENE.—Yes, falsehood sullies ; and therefore its emblem is prostitution, as that of pure truth is virginity. Observe how the virgins, dressed in white robes, are emblematic of it. Truly, the worship of the beautiful and true, for their own sake, is a virginal sensation ! And virginity is the exact symbol of that candour of the soul to which truth seems instinctive.

THE OFFICER.—And remark, also, how often the word Virgin is used in Scripture to distinguish the free, disinterested love of truth. Before the profane union of holy truth with human errors, Zion, Judah, Jerusalem, and Israel, are all spoken of as virgins. You remember the emblems of corn and wine ; see how they are employed by Zechariah : How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty ! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and pure wine beautify the virgins. It is not wine which would embellish virgins, if the expression be taken materially, but, as the symbol of truth, how natural to say that it beautifies all pure and innocent affections !

MYSELF.—I am not sorry at having interrupted you. I can now read many parts of the Bible without my former scruples. It is said of these pure affections that no falsehood has sullied them—that they follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth. What an admirable union, in fact, that of pure truth and innocence ! What a poet we have met with !

THE OFFICER.—And observe how accurate our explanation is ! All that St John adds is an additional proof of it. He says : These were redeemed from among men ; and truly, the proof of regeneration is that candour of the soul which loves truth for truth's sake, not for display, or as a mask to the passions. And he continues : They are consecrated to God, being the first fruits of the Lamb. Here your heart as well as imagination will assist you, for what can be a holier offering

to God than the first affections of a pure virgin heart? And what are the first fruits of virginity if not its first affections?

EUGENE.—One would imagine you gave ideas to St John, if the study of the human heart did not confirm your theories, and accord with Holy Scripture. Of what are we most jealous, if not of the first affections of a pure and innocent soul? And the ideas attached to virginity throughout all ages confirm your assertion. The delirium of the senses but symbolises the still greater joy of the heart; for to be loved, to be loved the first and above and before all, is in reality what causes the highest sensation of rapture! Our erotic poets should read the Apocalypse!

Now we are on somewhat human ground, my friends, and I am not sorry to have left the constellations.

THE OFFICER.—But do not let us dwell too long on this subject. Virginity is also modesty, and droops her eyes when spoken of.

To conclude, I would say that the first-fruits offered to Jehovah throughout the Old Testament symbolise those first affections of the human heart which, from their nature, ought to be offered by man to God. In the Jewish Church, we find the first-fruits of oil, wine, the flocks, and the harvest, presented to Jehovah, as emblematic of the feelings and thoughts which these things represented.

MYSELF.—Thus, originally, the portion set apart for the priesthood was an emblem. And how emblems may change their ancient application! for the Jewish first-fruits have become the Christian tithes by the revolution of centuries! Let us return, however, to our subject. Your explanation is perfectly correct relative to those who are represented as virgins, not defiled with women, and set apart as the first-fruits of the Lamb; the verse following confirms it, for there I read: In their mouth was found no guile, they are pure and without stain before the throne of God. Thus St John gives a commentary himself. These virgins, he says, pure and stainless, having never uttered lies, cannot have falsified truth. This is evidently the sense. Without spot or stain is to be without error. If truth is light, a spot which obscures it is visibly an error that defiles.

THE OFFICER.—For this reason, in the Jewish Church—which was altogether representative—it was forbidden, as we learn from Leviticus, to offer in sacrifice any beast that had a blemish or spot. Spots were emblems, and superstition has preserved the idea in attaching a moral signification to the spots on the human skin. Let us pass on now to the scene where an angel flies through heaven with the gospel in his hand. You see there evidently the announcement of the final judgment. St John could not behold the wicked expelled

from heaven without at same time the opposite view presenting itself to his mind—that of the new Church rising upon the ruins of the old. He cannot see it completely until the spiritual world is entirely purged from the vices that dishonour it; but, in the meantime, he sees something of the new glory, since he ardently desires it.

St John represents this angel as holding the Gospel, for the word Gospel signifies glad tidings, and such is the announcement of a new era of regeneration for man. Isaiah says: Ascend upon a high mountain, Sion, and be the evangelist to thyself; and the Psalmist: Preach from day to day the evangel of Jehovah. The angel who informs Zacharias that his wife shall have a son, tells him, at the same time, that he came to announce the Gospel, the glad tidings. The Gospel in the angel's hand, therefore, is a sign that the golden age is about to be renewed for the world. In the following verse we have an example of those breaks or episodes so frequent in the writings of extatics. Another angel follows, crying: Babylon is fallen! yet the fall of this great city is not described until after the three chapters on which we are now occupied. You see it is impossible for an extatic to give his sensations in a purely didactic order. He perceives, at one moment, as if by a flash of lightning, the same event which at another is unfolded to him more fully and distinctly; or, to speak with greater exactness, the moments that separate our impressions do not exist for him. He only knows states of life. Reflect for an instant upon some past moment of joy or grief, and see how a hundred accessory ideas will traverse your mind without the dominant one ever passing away. The first sensation is always there. A thousand others may supervene, and seem to make it disappear, but again it reappears. Under the influence of intense feeling, the soul is no longer mistress of herself, and thoughts crowd and mingle without any order of succession. It is only when the reason is calm that we have full command over our ideas and expressions; and we have already admitted that St John was not an academician tranquilly seated at his desk, judging coldly, and exhibiting artistically, wondrous and ingenious allegories. He is simply an extatic expressing what he feels; and extatics neither see nor feel after the manner of philosophers. That being settled, let us hear what the third angel says to those who worship the beast and receive his mark on their forehead or their hand: They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God; they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever. Now, my friends, we may see how easy it is to read the Apocalypse! These emblems of the beast, the forehead, the hand, of wine, anger, fire, brimstone, and smoke, being all known to us, we may at once translate the phrase thus:—"Those who adopt the dogma of

Barren Faith, and who bear the impress of it in their intellect and their heart, shall suffer from the trouble that all error brings with it, and be tormented by the love of themselves and of the world, till the impure mists of their own thoughts shall environ them eternally." Is not that, my friends, what happens to the moral nature of every man who adopts a doctrine in which there is neither faith nor love ?

MYSELF.—My intellect is sometimes obtuse, so tell me if I have read the emblems rightly. Wine signifies truth ; the wine of wrath, therefore, is the emblem of falsehood, tormenting man ; but, though falsehood is his own work, man attributes it to God himself, from whom, however, nothing but love and truth really proceeds. Is not that so ?

EUGENE.—Observe how readily man attributes to God the passions which are the peculiar property of his own nature ! Falsehood and error are our own work, yet which of us does not complain to Heaven of the consequences which they bring on us ? Man falsifies Divine truth, and suffers for it ; then imagines that God has handed him the poisoned draught, and looks upon himself as in the grasp of a being who takes pleasure in tormenting him.

THE OFFICER.—You speak like one of the prophets. Has not the Psalmist realised this picture ? The cup, he says, is in the hand of the Lord. He has mingled wine with it ; He has poured it on the earth ; the wicked shall drink thereof. The rest you can read without my commentary, for it is easy to imagine how people who live in habitual sin and falsehood can have rest neither night nor day. From these St John passes suddenly to the elect. He perceives them, and exclaims : Here is the patience of the saints. Here is temptation surmounted by those who live in the Good and True. There is no greater patience than this ; and, to distinguish them from the degenerate Christians who acknowledge neither a God of love nor the precepts of the Decalogue, St John adds : These saints keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. It is a clear denunciation of those who, we have seen, reject the precepts of a religious life, and substitute Christ, the object of faith, for Jesus, the God of love. Tell me now if our system of interpretation be not the true one. Have you found a single thing in contradiction with the system of interpretation we laid down at the beginning ?

EUGENE.—Not once. I understand clearly this voice, which cries : Happy are the dead that die in the Lord. Of course, the dead are those who die to their evil passions. St Paul says explicitly, that all who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts ; and, without being devotees, you can readily imagine that dying to the world is a new birth into a real life.

THE OFFICER.—Unless a grain of wheat die in the ground, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. These words of St Paul's place the matter in its true light. You see that St John meant none but a spiritual death, the only death noticed in Scripture. The Psalmist says : The death of his saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord. A palpable absurdity, if taken literally, but an incontestable truth, if applied to moral regeneration. The resurrection of which St Luke speaks is but a consequence of these ideas, which we shall treat of elsewhere more in detail. At present, our attention is called to a different scene. St John sees an angel armed with a scythe, and another angel coming out of the Temple, who cries to the first : Thrust in thy sickle, and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap. Immediately the order is executed, and the earth is reaped. After that a third angel appears, likewise armed with a sickle ; and a fourth, coming out from the Altar, bids him also to thrust in his sickle. But this time, not the Harvest, but the Vineyard of the earth, is reaped, and the grapes are flung into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. Do you understand all these emblems ?

EUGENE AND MYSELF.—Not clearly, perhaps. There are a few difficulties.

THE OFFICER.—Observe that two angels reap, one the earth, the other the vineyard ; and of the two angels who issue orders to the reapers, one comes out from the temple, the other from the altar ; and he, as St John tells us, had power over fire. Here, then, are four emblems not very difficult to decipher. The two reapers put an end to the fallen corrupt Church.

Nothing more natural than the image of a reaper to express that. The two angels who commanded the operation came forth, one from the Spiritual kingdom, or the Temple, the other from the Celestial kingdom, or the Altar ; and the fire over which he has power clearly means the Divine love, which warms and irradiates this second kingdom. But the wine-press is an emblem upon which we must pause.

MYSELF.—I have so much pleasure in hearing you on the subject of emblems, that I beg you will give a detailed explanation of this one ; and to proceed in order, let us begin from the first verse of the vision, the fourteenth. Here it is said that St John saw a form seated on a white cloud : the cloud is the Word in its literal sense ; the whiteness expresses clearly the splendour which the spiritual meaning casts upon our souls, though still we see it partially obscured. This inner light even poetry itself cannot paint better than as a transparent cloud, like those exquisite shadows flung by the branches on a bright summer sky, which do not hide, but only soften the light for our weak mortal eyes.

St John must, indeed, be looking on a representation of

heaven, for Christ himself says, in St Matthew, that he will come in the clouds of heaven. Thus we have given no forced interpretation here.

THE OFFICER.—The apostles were often in a state of extasis. We are told in the Acts, that, while they looked, Jesus was carried up to heaven on a cloud, and that two men dressed in white said to them : He who has thus ascended into heaven will come again in the same manner. From that, some literal readers have concluded that Christ will really appear some day to our corporeal eyes, coming in clouds, just as the apostles perceived him with the eyes of the Spirit. Is it not clear that at that moment they were struck with the truth of the inner sense of the letter of Scripture, and this sense with the signification immediately appeared to them under the usual emblem adopted in the spirit world ! Those who announced to them the future coming of Christ, in like manner simply said : Others will one day read the Scriptures spiritually like you, and comprehend it like you, for the Lord will give them understanding. That was all ; and if some among these should be extatics, no doubt the moral nature of the thing will assume for them the same substance and form which ordinarily represent it in the spirit world. Elsewhere, we shall see these clouds of heaven play an important part ; but let us pass now to another emblem. Our Lord held in his hand a sickle, the natural emblem of harvest. Truth, when represented as with power, has always some attribute. We have already seen the sword, the bow, the reed, employed for this purpose : for an instrument being a supplemental arm, every operation of the arm requires an instrument to correspond. The sickle, therefore, is suitable to the mower. The angel from the temple represents, as we have said, the spiritual kingdom, because the temple is a place of teaching, and used figuratively to express the doctrine taught.

EUGENE.—The containing taken for the contained. This is familiar to us. I observe the second angel bids the other to thrust in his sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. This visibly indicates the last state of a fallen Church, ripe for its ruin. It is a noble idea thus to figure heaven demanding from Christ, through the organ of an angel, the end of error and vice, in order that truth and justice may reign paramount !

THE OFFICER.—Joel, describing the end of the Jewish Church, makes Jehovah speak thus : I will sit to judge all nations ; put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. And Isaiah, with poetic pomp, says : In the morning your seed flourishes ; your harvest is a heap in the day of gathering. You remember also how Jesus, who came to put an end to the ancient Church, says to his disciples : See how the fields are white already to harvest ; while, to shew them he did not speak in a natural

sense, he adds : I have sent you forth as reapers to the harvest. But St Matthew leaves the signification beyond doubt, in that well-known parable where our Lord compares the Church to a field sown with wheat and tares, and makes the master of the field say : Let both grow together till the harvest, then bind the tares in a bundle, and burn them, but gather the wheat into the garner.

MYSELF.—Christ's disciples asked him the meaning of that, but we need not ask, for it is clear that the field is the world, the good grain is truth, the tares signify falsehood, and the harvest is the end of the Church. On beholding the end of ours, St John would, therefore, naturally see this admirable parable realised in a picture. Could a finer be imagined ? I see nothing incomprehensible in all we have gone through ; but I confess that the vintage which follows may well excite some cavilling, from its very singular result.

THE OFFICER.—Wine is the emblem of truth ; it proceeds from the vine, the symbol of doctrine, and the signification is simply that the Church or the vine undergoes the same operation as the entire world. Whatever relates directly to her, therefore, assumes to the eyes of a visionary the appearance of a vintage scene, because, in fact, these scenes characterise very exactly the affinities of truth with wine, which is its symbol. You have examined all these emblems in detail. You know that St John sees only two parties in the spiritual creation—the world and the Church. For him but two orders exist—laity and clergy. After describing what concerns the first, he proceeds to the second. The prophets always associate the idea of harvest with that of the vintage. Micah says : I have become like the gleanings of harvest, and the last grapes of the vintage. And Isaiah : Ye shall be troubled, ye who confide in your harvest ; the vintage is over, but the gleanings shall not be yours.

As to passages confirmatory of the explanation that the vine symbolises the Church, the whole Bible is full of them. Speaking of the Jewish Church, Isaiah says : My well-beloved had a vine ; he waited for it to bring forth good grapes, but it produced only wild grapes. And, lastly, Jesus, the Church personified, says clearly, speaking of himself : I am the vine, and ye are the branches. Elsewhere he compares the kingdom of heaven to a householder who sent forth labourers into the vineyard. Just observe, before proceeding, these singular modes of expression. The kingdom of heaven compared to a man, and the father of a family. In ordinary language, we would say, the kingdom of heaven is like such or such a place ; but there is no place as regards heaven, for heaven is life proceeding from the Lord, and received within different receptacles, whether individual or collective.

EUGENE.—How glorious this perspective of the other world ! The more we dwell on it, the clearer becomes our conception of its true nature. Heaven is thus a vast organism, not a world divided into regions. It is a Divine life which makes heaven ; and now I see the profound meaning of that saying in the gospel : The kingdom of heaven is within you. In a word, heaven is the human soul ; a truth as simple as it is philosophical.

THE OFFICER.—Jesus Christ, announcing his own death to the Jews, told them that a man having planted a vineyard, let it out to husbandmen, but they, wishing to keep the produce for themselves, killed the son of the proprietor.

MYSELF.—The Jews made an historic truth of the parable.

THE OFFICER.—Well, other husbandmen came after the Jews to tend the new Vine, but they did as the former, and killed the Son, by denying his Divine humanity. The predictions of Christ apply to the two Churches ; if the Jewish vine was given to other husbandmen, so will the Christian Vine of our times, when the Son is killed, be given to those who acknowledge him as proprietor and Lord.

MYSELF.—How clear are these emblems ! I can scarcely persuade myself that we are reading the Apocalypse, and, except for the wine-press, gorged with blood, which terminates the chapter, I might think we had been studying only a development of the Gospel.

THE OFFICER.—It is quite natural for St John to see the vintage flung into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. The machine for pressing forth the juice of the grape, is it not a fitting emblem of the tests which prove the quality and value of a man's belief ? The wrath which is exhibited proceeds from man alone. You know that by heart. As the wine-press manifests the quality of fruit by its juice, it is often used in Scripture as the ordinary hieroglyphic for that spiritual examination which manifests the nature of human thoughts and works. Isaiah represents a wine-press in the middle of the vineyard. Joel says : Repair the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ; descend, for the wine-press is full. Their garners and their wine-press will not nourish them, exclaims Hoseah. Elsewhere the same prophet says : Rejoice, ye daughters of Zion, for the garners are full of wheat, and presses overflow with oil and wine. The wine-press being trodden, signifies the thoughts and works manifested. Those seen by St John present a fearful spectacle.

EUGENE.—But do not proceed so rapidly. This wine-press is trodden without the city. What city is meant, and why does the action take place *extra muros* ?

THE OFFICER.—The city was named in the preceding chapter. It is that called, spiritually, Sodom and Egypt, and of which

we have already spoken frequently. You know that neither faith nor charity were found in it. The Divine truth, which manifests itself in works, that uncreated light which reveals all things, was not there; therefore, it was not *intra muros*, to respond to your expression with an equivalent, that St John could behold this manifestation. The deduction is perfectly logical. Now, to return to the picture: the blood gushed from the wine-press in such abundance, that the horses were covered with it, up to the bridles, for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. Crushed grapes should only produce wine; but the extatic sees blood, the emblem, as we said before, of falsified truth. It is the same idea which is expressed in another place by water being turned into blood. Wine and blood are two hieroglyphics of the same thing. Thus, in Genesis, we read of the blood of the grape. When Christ instituted the Eucharist, in which truth is represented by wine, and love by bread, did he not, in his discourse, substitute for these emblems the types of flesh and blood? Saying: If ye do not eat my flesh, nor drink my blood, ye have no life in you. The emblem, you observe, is twofold. Falsified truth, then, naturally appears to St John under the form of blood. The blood of the Lamb, that of Christ, is Divine truth; the blood seen by St John is that of the false and evil. Isaiah says: Your hands are stained with blood; wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your works. See how this confirms the propriety of St John's image. The evil of these works appears to him, as to Isaiah, under the appearance of blood.

MYSELF.—Do not accumulate more quotations. We have enough to prove the meaning of the term employed, and it is evidently in perfect accordance with the usual emblematic language. I think it likely that these horses, submerged in blood to the bridles, signify intellects so full of falsehood that they may be said to be drowned in error. But what think you mean the bridles?

THE OFFICER.—By a bridle a horse is guided. The bridle is therefore the emblem of truth guiding the understanding. You can see plainly how a horse who has got the bridle in his teeth, typifies a man whom truth has lost the power to guide. Thy pride, says Jehovah, has ascended to my throne, therefore I will put a bridle in thy mouth. The phrase is in Isaiah, and can anything express more energetically Divine truth putting a curb on the delirium of human pride? Lastly, my friends, —and this finishes the chapter—the horses seen by St John covered a space of 1600 furlongs. But as there is no fixed space in the spirit world, therefore the numerical expression must mean a state of evil and falsehood. Now, the number itself explains the quality of this state, for we know that numbers express the qualities of things. 1600 is the result

of 400 multiplied by 4 ; or, in simpler terms, it is the same as 16, or 4 multiplied by 4. The multiple has the same signification as the simple figure, only it expresses the value more forcibly. 4, as you know, symbolises the totality of good ; and, in an opposite sense, the totality of evil. Thus, in expressing in hundreds in place of units, the number formed of 4 multiplied by itself, the extatic intended to express the immense force and extent of the evil.

MYSELF.—The figurative mode of speech you unconsciously employ affords a most powerful confirmation of your theories ; for you say the *extent* of evil. Now, is not that admitting that evil, which is a state, naturally assumes in thought the form of space. These 1600 furlongs, therefore, which I formerly looked on as a ridiculous exaggeration, and totally incompatible with any rational idea of Heaven, now seem to me not only a fitting, but a rigorously correct mode of expression.

EUGENE.—Bossuet, reducing these furlongs to leagues, found they contained 67 ; and being naturally astonished at so much waste of blood in the Roman empire, concluded, like you, that the sacred author exaggerated—a judgment that never should be pronounced upon inspired books, which cannot possibly contain anything except the truth.

MYSELF.—Ah ! indeed ! But what does your Bossuet say of these virgins who have not been defiled with women ?

EUGENE.—According to him, the expression is but a flower of rhetoric. The Apostle, he thinks, means to describe those who have remained untouched by human weakness, in which case the woman, according to his theory, is the emblem of moral weakness. This is not polite, you see. Afterwards, he seems to feel some remorse, and says that perhaps St Augustine was right in taking the phrase literally. You were in doubt some time ago about the meaning of the wine-press being trodden outside the town. Here it is :—Attila was the vintage, who ravaged Italy, but spared Rome.

MYSELF.—What nonsense learned men have talked, and how the Christian world has believed them !

EUGENE.—Well, tell us what Dupuis says on the subject.

MYSELF.—The Lamb appears at the opening of the chapter, because, when the constellations representing the two beasts set in the west, the ram rises in the east. Thus, we have nothing here but the celestial phenomena marking the close of winter and the commencement of spring. The Mount Zion, you will understand, is the eastern edge of the horizon. You have not spoken of the crown worn by the first angel, because we know its signification. Dupuis, who might have found a crown in the celestial sphere—that of Ariadne—to crown Perseus, prefers saying that it is a mere emblem symbolising that Perscus presides at the opening year. As to the altar, that,

too, he finds in the sphere, and asserts that St John meant it alone. There is no resisting his reasoning. St John says that the angel of the altar had power over fire; and the pagan legend runs, that the constellation called the Altar was the work of the Cyclops—the forgers of Vulcan, the god of fire! Think, my friends, of pretended philosophers absolutely regarding such things as demonstrated!

THE OFFICER.—Some day our explanations will be made known, and I hope the friends of truth will find more solid aliment there. But your digressions have delayed us, and, to repair lost time, I must analyse very briefly the following chapter, which can be done easily, as it merely contains a hymn. First, we see seven angels having in their hands the seven last plagues. This is an image of all heaven, the holy truths of which being received by the wicked and impious, appear to them as plagues. Afterwards we see the good and just, figured by the conquerors of the beast, standing upon a sea of glass, mingled with fire, and holding harps in their hands. We know that this sea is the emblem of Divine truth, transparent as glass; the fire mixed there shews that some little love of evil still remains amongst those who formerly professed the creed of a dead faith. The harps typify the soft murmurs of their confession in a new and living faith. You see that the symbols are read fluently.

EUGENE.—These verses then proclaim that the Lord, by his simple presence, by his simple influence, is about to reveal all the falsehood and errors existing in the Church. You call them plagues; reason understands you, but does Scripture confirm your opinion?

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah says: Jehovah in his anger strikes the people with incurable plagues; and Jeremiah leaves no doubt as to the meaning of these plagues, for his words are: Thy sins are without number, but I will heal thee of thy plagues. In Deuteronomy, Moses tells us: If thou art not constant to observe all the words of the law, Jehovah will make thy plagues great; and the Psalmist: Evil shall not come against thee, nor the plague approach thy tent. Jeremiah says also: Whoever passes near Edom, will make a mock of all his plagues.

MYSELF.—The plagues of Egypt have a striking resemblance, for the most part, to those we are about to discuss, and, like them, were emblems of evil and falsehood.

EUGENE.—In the fourth chapter, we had the crystal sea. This of glass, which is less pure, expresses truths not yet sufficiently purified to be presented as they are. If the fire mixed with it does not express the love of good, it must necessarily express the love of evil—there is no medium. The emblem is not forced. St John says, that these converted souls sing the song of Moses and that of the Lamb. The

song of Moses, we know; but the Gospel tells us nothing of the song of Christ, who is typified here by the Lamb.

THE OFFICER.—These two hymns express the two truths with which these converts, as you call them, are filled—truths which they had formerly denied. One of them concerns the doctrine of the Divine humanity: is not it justly named therefore the song of the Lamb? The other, having reference to the precepts of the Decalogue, is called with equal propriety the song of Moses, since it was he who transmitted to us that divine law.

MYSELF.—I thought Eugene's question would have quite overthrown you, but in place of that, your answer confirms all that you said previously upon the two principal dogmas of a dead faith. The thread never breaks in your hand, and possibly you mean to force us to conviction by shewing us that you cannot be confuted. Struggle as I will, still I must needs follow where you lead. Dupuis says, that the song of the Lamb is that chanted by the initiated, to celebrate the return of the sun to the equinoctial point where spring gains the victory over winter. That of Moses he considers identical with the one chanted by the prophet after the passage of the Red Sea, which, he says, expresses the joy of men freed from the rigours of winter, symbolised by the rigours of Egyptian captivity. We may take a hint from this. The initiated chant the mighty victory which the Ancient revelation had written in the skies, and Moses that which a subsequent revelation made known to him. See how Dupuis helps us! But you have well remarked how completely he goes astray when he tries to identify the seven angels with the seven Pleiades.

THE OFFICER.—I shall give you an example of his interpretations. He found in Kisker that the Pleiades amongst the Hebrews and Phœnicians were called by a name signifying the Tabernacle. On this he founds the identity of the angels with the constellations. One of the four animals presents the seven angels with seven golden vials. Dupuis infers from this that this animal is the bull, on whose back the Pleiades are placed in the sphere. By the vials he thinks are represented the urns usually given by the ancients to the Pleiades and their neighbours the Hyades, on account of their rainy influences: and the sea of glass mingled with fire is to his eyes but the firmament studded with stars. A mind content with such puerilities is not difficult to please. Bossuet is more cautious and critical. Indeed, but for the historic system which haunted him, he might have had remarkable success. In the sea of glass he sees the glory of the martyrs; and in the mingled fire, which he takes in a good sense, Divine love.

EUGENE.—Pray, now continue your own commentary.

THE OFFICER.—The song chanted by these spirits might be

sung likewise upon earth, without any one finding the words enigmatical. After that St John sees the temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony opened; which means that a more special manifestation of the inner heaven was made to him. As Bossuet says, it is this heaven where God resides in all his glory. The tabernacle signifies heaven unveiled; and if Dupuis found that the Pleiades bore that name, it was simply because astrologers took this constellation for their starting-point, when about to decipher the decrees of destiny.

Amongst the Hebrews, the inmost recess of the tabernacle was occupied by the Ark of the Covenant, a more certain expression of the Divine will than the obscure enigmas of the Book of Fato. It is from this inner heaven, or heaven in its highest degree, that the seven angels come forth; and, in truth, the Divine benediction leaves the eternal throne as an emanation of love, and only turns into plagues when it falls upon an impure receptacle. The seven angels are clothed in white, and girded with golden girdles. There can be no room for doubt here. These are the attributes of pure truth and unmixed love.

MYSELF.—All who descend from heaven are clothed thus. The girdle is familiar to us all as an emblem, and even ordinary language adopts the symbol of pure white linen to express unsullied truth.

THE OFFICER.—And Scripture, which is better authority, tells us that such was the sacred garment of the sacrificers under the old law. When the Levites entered into the inner courts, they were clothed in linen. In Daniel, the angels are robed similarly. So also the angels who appeared at the sepulchre of Christ were dazzling in white raiment, to express the truth which had deified his humanity. Then the vials were given to the angels by one of the four animals, St John continues; for these four animals of the fourth chapter re-appear everywhere here as an evidence that all the truths by which men are judged are drawn from the letter of Scripture. It is through revelation, in fact, that we are saved, and the Word is revelation fixed in the extremes. One should give every one their due, and it is only fair to observe that Bossuet makes an admirable remark here. These four beasts, he says, are always present when God reveals his secrets, which means, that holy things must be interpreted according to the Gospel.

EUGENE.—Your meaning has a wider signification than his, for he persists in restricting revelation to the Gospel alone, seeing nothing in these four animals but the four Evangelists; whereas you shew us the Spirit of God filling both Testaments alike. The seven cups of gold, or vials, signify the seven influences that are about to descend from heaven, but which, falling on the wicked, turn to seven plagues. Here, as elsewhere,

the vase is taken for the liquor—the containing for the contained. Thus the Hyades and Pleiades might well be represented with urns, in consequence of their supposed physical influence upon the earth. We say, familiarly, the cup for the wine, the plate for the meat. Christ bids the Pharisees to cleanse the inside of the Cup and Platter; meaning that they should cleanse the Intellect and Heart, to make them fit receptacles of the holy Wine and Food suited to the Spirit. How everything we meet with in Scripture in reference to these emblems confirms your theory!

THE OFFICER.—The prophets speak frequently of the cup of Jehovah's wrath. Jeremiah says: The golden cup of Babylon that intoxicates all the earth, is in the hand of the Lord. Truth is in the cup, no doubt, but man falsifies the truth, and so, in place of refreshing, it intoxicates. Christ himself, when he suffered the False to approach him, in order to teach us how to resist it, exclaimed: If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

MYSELF.—When we wish to represent grief, do we not paint the fatal chalice held by trembling hands? Is not a deep sorrow spoken of as a cup that one must drink? the bitterest despair that which we drain to the dregs? Again, to express joy and mirth, we speak of circulating the festive cup. In fact, all your emblematic words are found in the immense vocabulary of reason and poetry together. Lastly, the temple is filled with smoke: this, however, does not seem a suitable emblem, considering that St John is now within the supreme heaven.

THE OFFICER.—But the smoke is no more a part of heaven than the cloud is of the sun. Light alone is his attribute; the clouds belong to our world. So is it in heaven. The brightness of truth shines in the superior degrees, but in the inferior, where the spirits are, the smoke interposes between them and the God whom they are not pure enough to behold face to face. In the highest heaven, God, or love, is typified by fire; lower down, the fire is veiled by clouds of human weakness, as material fire shrouds itself in smoke. Isaiah tells us that on Mount Zion there was smoke with the splendour of fire, which, he adds, will be a veil upon its glory. What more definite explanation could you demand?

The Apostle continues: No one could enter the temple until the seven plagues were fulfilled. No one, says Moses, can see God and live. No one, therefore, can perceive the Divine majesty even in heaven, or sustain the celestial influence, until the mists which veiled, and the affections which deteriorated, its essence are removed. There must be nothing interposed between us and God; neither our vain reasonings nor our blind passions. Choose now between Bossuet and me in

the interpretation of this passage. He says no one enters the temple, because, when the Lord knocks, the spirits fly, sooner than enter the place from whence proceeds the sound. We need not pause upon such follies, but pass on to the sixteenth chapter, which offers no great difficulties, I hope.

A voice from the temple says to the seven angels: Go, pour out the vial of the wrath of God upon the earth. This temple is the same as that mentioned in the preceding chapter; that is to say, the Temple of the Testimony from which, in fact, the Divine influence proceeds, the reception of which will manifest the inner nature of all souls submitted to its test.

EUGENE.—St John seems never to have done with the judgments pronounced upon these fallen Christians. You say that seven signifies completeness. Now we have already seen seven angels armed with seven trumpets, proclaiming, one would think, all the evils that could possibly fall on these sinful souls. How is it that so many operations are necessary to manifest God's abhorrence of this particular doctrine?

THE OFFICER.—The seven angels who sounded the seven trumpets announced, boldly and clearly, the evils that reigned within the perverted Church; such is the meaning of the symbolic instrument. Now, we have a cup or vial, another symbol, showing that there is a life-giving liquid for those souls whose malady has been divulged, though the inner nature of the disease has not yet been made known.

MYSELF.—In fact, then, these vials contain a medicine for extirpating peccant humours?

EUGENE.—It is not enough to make known that evil exists within man. It is further necessary to tear off the disguises with which he seeks to veil it, and shew its nature clearly. Thus, in place of these vials extirpating peccant humours, as you flippantly term it, I imagine that the benign influences of heaven will be the very means of manifesting and bringing to light the impiety and vices within these evil souls. In fact, they will not receive these heavenly influences; and, by rejecting them, will be forced to cast away the little exterior good that was in them, which served as a cloak to their vices. First, the sound of the trumpets announced who were the impious. Now, these are about to be placed in a position which will force them to avow themselves as such. Before descending into hell, they must fling off their masks; and how can that be done, except by openly rejecting the good and truth that comes from God?

MYSELF.—True. The Divine gifts are poured on them; but, as these are only a torment to their wickedness, they are rejected by them. It is an admirable means of testing their real nature. But you are silent, my friend. Do you approve of our interpretation?

THE OFFICER.—Divine Providence always acts thus. Love is poured out freely upon creation, but hatred flings it back again to heaven: truth shines into all souls, but pride stifles it with error. Peace descends into the heart which is filled with charity, but, at the same time, takes from crime the factitious tranquillity which it seemed to enjoy. The Evangelists affirm that God always acts thus: To him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have. What we are beholding is the fulfilment of this prophecy. The first angel pours his vial upon the earth, and the followers of the beast are struck with a malignant sore. The earth is the Church; the men bearing the mark of the beast are the clergy, or that teaching body whose doctrine is a dead faith. The Divine influence turns to sores when it falls upon them, proving that their blood was vitiated; or, in other words, that their souls were diseased with internal malignity.

MYSELF.—But do ulcers always proceed from vitiated blood?

THE OFFICER.—The language of symbols is always in accordance with received popular notions; and is it not generally believed that external sores proceed from internal disease? The extatics, therefore, adopt this emblem to express a diseased state of the soul. You accepted the emblem of the locusts in the ninth chapter, though naturalists will tell you these insects are quite too small to bear the armour St John sees on them. Do not seek for scientific proof, where allusion is meant only to popular belief. If Scripture speaks according to our common idiom, we should be content.

Isaiah says of the Jewish people, that, from head to foot, they were nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. In Deuteronomy, those who disobey the law are threatened with ulcers and leprosy, which shall never be healed. In Leviticus, the different corruptions of the Church are designated as different stages of leprosy; and the word, in St John's recital, evidently is used with reference to its primitive meaning. The second vial is poured upon the sea, which becomes as the blood of a dead man. The sea signifies the externals of the Church—the multitude, the laity, in fact. The emblem is already fixed.

Blood means falsified truth, and the horrible appearance of the blood of a dead man typifies infernal falsehood, for from it comes spiritual death. Thus, St John says that every living thing died in the sea. Is not that expressing that all spiritual life became extinct? The third vial is poured upon the fountains and springs, which become blood likewise.

The fountains and springs which fertilise the material earth are emblematic of the Divine Word, which vivifies souls; but in those who received these springs of life they became poi-

soned. And so we hear the angel of the waters praising the justice of God, and exclaiming energetically: They shed the blood of the prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.

MYSELF.—That is the law of retaliation. In fact, the absurd doctrine which you have pointed out to us having falsified all good and truth in God's Word, nothing was fitter for the false Church to drink than the cup of its own errors. At this moment the voice of another angel from the altar is heard, confirming the words of the angel of the waters. The first, probably, was the voice of truth; the second from the altar that of good, which always is found confirming the true, as love strengthens and confirms the judgment of our intellect. Everywhere we find these two principles in action.

EUGENE.—Yes; and, in fact, one exhibits the Justice of God, the other his truth and righteous Judgment. The mystic marriage—that indissoluble union of the two fundamental parts of the moral creation—appears in everything. Observe here, says Bossuet, how the angels consent to praise God. What condescension!—it is most edifying!

THE OFFICER.—You appear thoroughly to understand the symbols now, my friends. Let us continue. A fourth angel pours out his vial upon the sun, and power is given him to scorch men with fire. Divine love being extinct in the human heart, is it not quite natural that interested love, selfishness—that passion that flatters, yet torments us—should take its place? Believe me, none but those who are filled with self-love can ever be tormented by Divine love. In fact, a narrow self-love keeps us for ever prisoned within the limits of self, while the Divine influence expands our hearts to receive within it the love of God and our neighbour.

Is not a miser tormented by shewing him the beauty of generosity? Is not a libertine uneasy in the sacred presence of modesty and chastity? Their natures blaspheme the virtues which combat their inclinations; and this is precisely the mode of action imputed to them in the Apocalypse. Heaven repeats earth, and earth heaven. There is but one type for the two worlds.

MYSELF.—But in your hands the Apocalypse is no longer a mystery, for these are incontestable truths, not mere probabilities. St John adds: They repented not. And I can readily believe that selfishness is the vice hardest to eradicate. It makes at once the joy and the torment of those minds which are filled with it. How admirably revelation paints the human heart! How one learns philosophy from the Apocalypse!

THE OFFICER.—The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom became dark. This can be simply explained. The very brightness of the Divine light makes

the man who lives in error appear walking in deeper shadow. To himself he seems always in the light, but his neighbour beholds him encompassed with thick darkness. Is it not truth that manifests error? Is it not by Divine light we see all that is opposed to God? And he alone who is enlightened by this light can judge and know of the absolute good. Human error has always sufficient pretension to truth to impose upon the crowd; it is the Divine light alone that can shew its absolute darkness. These souls, like the preceding, continue obstinately in their errors, and blaspheme God because of their sufferings.

EUGENE.—Yes; and the text adds, they gnawed their tongues for pain. Is it not a singular expression?

THE OFFICER.—It is with the tongue that we confess Truth: it is the instrument of language. To bite it, therefore, is to prevent one's self avowing the truth which combats our cherished error; and the pain these men feel is simply the result of finding their natural inclinations opposed; for the only agent acting against Error here is Truth.

MYSELF.—Have we not all seen people suffering under the torment of hearing disagreeable truths? How they bite their lips and press their teeth on their tongue! The movement, you see, is common to the spirit world as well as to this. But these are trivialities. Let us pass on to the sixth angel; he who pours his vial on the Euphrates, that the waters may be dried up for the kings of the East to pass over.

EUGENE.—Bossuet says, that the Euphrates being dried up by the angel's vial, the kings of the East found a way to march against Rome, this river having been one of the barriers of the empire. You have led us to consider it as one of the barriers of the intellect, and this, I think, is the true meaning of the symbol. We are aware that it means the *rational*, in which the man tries to live who has crushed the *spiritual* life within him, though it is clear that, like merely natural good, it is but an illusion of his understanding. This resource being taken away, which is expressed by the waters being dried up, the friends of Divine truth—the kings of the East—proceed straight to God, unobstructed by the obstacles born of false human reasoning. It is man who stands between God and man. It is his own false doctrines and delusions that raise a barrier between earth and heaven; and the Euphrates symbolises this barrier.

When the children of Israel entered Canaan, the Jordan, in like manner, was parted to let them pass. This is a speaking emblem. Poor human reason, with all its sophisms, must be cast aside to leave the way clear for the passage of truth. Observe that St John never describes the fall of evil without indicating the good that is to follow. Thus, when telling us how

the Euphrates was dried up, or the barrier removed that obstructed spiritual progress, he shews at the same time the progress of the friends of Truth following close upon the doom of Error.

MYSELF.—But I wish St John had made the statement in plain words like you, in place of talking of a river, which being actually a boundary to certain Oriental countries, may be taken as a reality and not as an image.

EUGENE.—That would be to annihilate the peculiar language of extatics. Remember that these phrases always apply to two worlds; it is their idiom, and you must accept it. Were we all visionaries, this idiom of symbols would seem in nothing strange, though now it often strikes us as absurd. Let us never forget that we are discussing scenes in the spirit world, not the natural. That once kept in mind, everything seems comprehensible, as the expression of a life whose sensations are different from ours. But let us continue.

THE OFFICER.—The moment the Euphrates is dried up, the dragon, the first beast, and the second beast, called by the extatic the false prophet, reappear, as might be expected, and from their mouths go forth three unclean spirits like frogs. By the mouth here is meant doctrine. Spirits go forth from it to the number of *three*, which, as we know, means totality as to falsehood. Lastly, they have the form of frogs, whose disagreeable croaking aptly represents to the visionary the dissonance of false human reasoning.

MYSELF.—But there is malice in that symbol. Do not our poets also disdainfully compare bad rhymers to the frogs of the marshes? Now, as all here refers to the good and true, I would rather assume, with you, that these croakings expressed false reasonings than the accents of truth.

THE OFFICER.—Both in Exodus and the Psalms we find this emblem, so that it does not appear for the first time in the Apocalypse. You know that when Aaron extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, frogs, the symbol of false human reasonings, came up upon the earth. These frogs remained afterwards in the river, to express the false doctrines held by the people of the Delta. The Apostle tells us afterwards that these frogs are the spirits of devils, who, under this form, work miracles and go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And do not we find the upholders of false doctrine always filled with anxiety to corrupt the friends of truth, and induce them to reject the Divine light? The spirit of proselytism is not limited to those who are filled with pure zeal; false zeal has its desire likewise—an infernal love, which makes it ardently long to draw down others to its own level. The combat of the great day evidently alludes to the day which consum-

mates the fall of the ancient Church and establishes the new. St John could have had no other battle in view. Jeremiah says: Behold the great day of Jehovah; plainly meaning the end of the Church. And Ezekiel declares: That the impious will not be able to resist the day of the Almighty's battle. Behold, says Zechariah, the day of Jehovah approaches. Everywhere the day of Jehovah signifies the advent of the Lord. When the Light is near, is it wonderful that Error should prepare itself for the combat?

EUGENE.—The combat of light and darkness, Truth and Error, is the only one that has existed since the creation of the world, and which is ever reproduced throughout all the epochs of time. God brought peace into the world, but disorder followed it immediately. The human *me* is always there in opposition to God; but, when evil and falsehood have culminated, and seem on the point of overcoming the equilibrium, then Providence comes to the succour of humanity, vanquishes the enemy, and evil and falsehood vanish again into annihilation. Before their defeat, however, what ardour and perseverance do they not exhibit!

All readers of history must perceive how especially bitter is the combat of opposing doctrines at the moment which decides the triumph of one and the defeat of the other. Then it is that they assemble their forces, and gather up their final strength! What zeal, what overwhelming energy is exhibited in that last decisive hour! St John has studied Man and Society as well as the human heart.

THE OFFICER.—His mind being filled with the idea of this spiritual combat, St John ceases suddenly to be the narrator, and gives place to the Lord, who speaks in his own person. Behold, he says, *I come as a thief*. Blessed is he that keepeth his garments! This expression was used before in the third chapter. Truths are the garment of the soul—blessed is he who keepeth them from the thief, or evil, which comes to steal away the good and true from men's hearts. But when tempted by evil, we attribute the temptation to God, though nothing but holy influences can proceed from him. Even our external acts of worship are perverted by self-love into a motive for glorifying ourselves, thereby robbing God of the honour due unto him; and, when the good has passed away from our nature, we accuse Heaven and not ourselves. This comparison of a thief is very frequent in the New Testament, with reference to the good being taken from men's hearts.

The poet passes finally to the end of the drama, and tells us that these spirits assembled their kings in a place called in Hebrew *Armageddon*.

We have seen the dragon, abandoning the woman, run to the combat; the beast risen from the sea going forth to war

against the saints. The same image is reproduced here before the Apostle's eyes. The word Armageddon signifies the love of honour. *Aram* in Hebrew is height, and *megiddon* the love of height. And is it not the love of power, of pre-eminence, which incites man to combat the Truth? It is hard for him to obey who thinks he was born to command. The prophet Zechariah, describing also the end of the Church, alludes to the combat that will take place in the Valley of Megiddon.

EUGENE.—Bossuet, observing that kings are mentioned here, as well as in Zechariah, says that Armageddon signifies *the place where kings perish*, and fancies he has found it in a certain country of Asia, where Valerius and Julian were defeated and put to death by the Persians. Behold, he says, two emperors killed like the two kings mentioned by Zechariah.

THE OFFICER.—The seventh vial is poured upon the air. Air signifies the totality of all things that we perceive; in fact, it is by it that man breathes, and respiration is the exact symbol of the operations of the understanding. The meaning of the voices, lightnings, and thunderings, which accompany this last vision, are already known to us. An earthquake follows, to express the fall of the Church. The greatest that ever happened since men were on the earth, adds St John. These are Christ's own expressions when announcing the end of the world, as recorded by St Matthew. The tremendous nature of the event naturally recalls to the extatic our Lord's own symbols concerning it, and they evidently assume definite forms before his eyes. Lastly, we are told that the great city is divided into three. The city, called elsewhere Sodom and Egypt, signifies doctrine; the division into three, expresses the entire destruction made of it. Division marks that a thing has ceased to be one and coherent; the number three, that this division is complete. The prophet terminates by a momentary allusion to the great Babylon, whose destiny will occupy him presently more in detail, and finishes the picture by an image of the last plague—that of hail falling upon men. It is still man who changes the Divine influence into a plague by his own act. The weight of a talent alludes simply to the greatest weight of gold or silver used currently amongst the ancients. Gold and silver express the Good and True, as they come forth pure from God, which crush the wicked like a plague of hail, in place of enlightening and consoling them. It is the state of the receptacle, as we said before, which gives to an influence its peculiar character.

Now, my friends, we see the full scope of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters. You behold there the completion of the Divine vengeance exercised upon those who held the dogma of a dead faith. The vengeance commenced by first proclaiming the evil of this doctrine, as we see in the eighth chapter, and

terminates in the sixteenth, by the picture of its total annihilation. For the sake of clearness, I shall just draw your attention to the similarity of the images employed at the beginning and at the end of this judgment, by arranging them in one table.

In the 8th chapter, the first plague falls on the *earth*.

Chapter 8. The second plague falls on the *sea*.

Chapter 8. The fourth angel darkens the *sun*. In the 9th chapter, a smoke rises that darkens the air.

Chapter 10. The four angels of the *Euphrates* are unbound.

Chapter 11. The seventh trumpet proclaims that the kingdom has become the Lord's.

In the 16th chapter, the men on the *earth* are first struck with a grievous sore.

Chapter 16. The second vial is poured upon the *sea*.

Chapter 16. The vial is poured upon the *sun*, and darkness falls upon the kingdom of the beast.

Chapter 16. The *Euphrates* is dried up.

Chapter 16. The seventh cup terminates the victory of the True over the False.

You see clearly by this, that from the eighth chapter to the present, the one idea, or the history of the one doctrine, has occupied the mind of the Apostle. In the following chapter, you will be made acquainted with the second cause of degeneration in the work of the Deity. Meanwhile, let us rest for a little before beginning another discussion.

CHAPTER XI.

Rev., chaps. xvii. xviii.

THE FALL OF BABYLON.

THE OFFICER.—When we recapitulate what we have already examined of the Apocalypse, we see clearly that from the fourth to the eighth chapter, it describes the apparatus of a judgment in the spiritual world; while from the eighth to the sixteenth chapter, those who are in the False are treated of. It is also evident that those chapters which commence by the sound of the seven trumpets, and end by the pouring out of the seven vials, constitute only one and the same drama, interrupted with episodes, such as we must expect to take place in sensations like those of extatics. Since the entire moral creation is reducible to the True and the Good, we must, after having witnessed the Falsification of the first, necessarily look for the Adulteration of the second. In short, we have seen religion fallen through Falsehood; it remains for us to see it degenerated by Sin. The first cause of its degradation has been presented to us in the dogma of Faith alone; the second will now be shewn to be the attempt at Domination under the guise of religion. It is the latter we must understand by Babylou, without, at the same time, forgetting that this name may include grave abuses which are common to other religious sects, but which are more fully set forth in the doctrine of the Roman Catholic religion than in any other.

EUGENE.—I confess that my ears, accustomed as they are to expressions of tolerance, or at least of civility, are rather offended at this language of yours. To apply this name to a religion so universally diffused as the Roman Catholic, must be surely an error of the human mind; for, after all, among the multitude of honest hearts who profess it in so many and so various countries, there must be great numbers who practise its precepts, without reaping from it the evil effects which you point out as inherent in its nature.

THE OFFICER.—In every condition of life, mankind, by the

simple exercise of the common sense with which they are endowed—that universal light which each finds in his breast, when he is sincerely anxious to judge aright—have resisted those errors into which their guides and counsellors have fallen. Good Roman Catholics have refused to set aside the Divine power, just as we have seen, among Protestants, that the great mass have fulfilled their spiritual works or duties in the sight of God, although the clergy, in their dogmas, have declared them contrary to religion. You cannot deny that the doctrine of Faith without works, and the substitution of Man for God, are the two great causes of the decline and corruption of religion. They must, therefore, be found somewhere. I will grant you, if you like, that the great mass of mankind have never given their adhesion to those destructive doctrines; but you will always find that the great body of teachers have promulgated them; and this is all which it is necessary to grant, in order to comprehend the view taken by St John.

MYSELF.—I should prefer viewing the subject in a more philosophic point of view. Suppose these two causes of degeneration admitted, I should prefer saying that in every sect are to be found Babylonians and Dragonicians. Many Roman Catholics of my acquaintance have, in truth, only this faith without works, while many Protestants, on the contrary, fall into the superstitious worship of man, and swear by their divines, which is plainly idolatry. Ouly make this concession to good sense, and we are quite agreed. In this way the Babylonians, gathered together from all communions, may be considered as forming one body in the future world; and the Dragonicians, collected, in like manner, from all possible phases of the religious life, will be reunited in the same corporate body. They will thus form two great individuals, purely spiritual in their character.

THE OFFICER.—In fact, there is reason to believe that in this way matters are arranged in the other world. I add, moreover, that these two comprehensive denominations have had their faithful representatives on earth; and, taking history for my guide, I can prove that Faith without Works has been set up as a standard of religion by one party, and that superstitious Idolatry, or the adoration of man, has been converted into a national institution by another.

EUGENE.—Bossuet says that Protestants, in asserting that Christian Rome is the Babylon of the Apocalypse, have only followed the dictates of unreflecting hatred. I fear that you espouse their side of the controversy, or that you are led astray by prejudice. Christian Rome, continues Bossuet, has never deviated from the true faith, and cannot, therefore, be compared to a prostitute and an adulteress.

THE OFFICER.—It is easy to meet this argument. In order

to defend his communion from the reproach which it only too well deserved, Bossuet has attempted to prove that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the Rome of the Cæsars, and not of the sovereign pontiffs. And on what feeble grounds does he rely for proof! They are as follows:—St John says that Babylon had seven kings; Bossuet, taking this in the literal sense, tells us that the Church never was ruled by kings. He adds, that the scarlet-coloured beast cannot be anything else but the city which had adopted this colour for the ensigns of its emperors. Lastly, it is said that Babylon reigned over all the kings of the earth. “Now, it is very evident,” says Bossuet—intentionally overlooking here the fact of this empire being a spiritual one, although in other places, when it suits his purpose, he is quite aware that such is the case—“it is very evident,” he repeats, “that pagan Rome alone could make this boast.” The Protestants objected to the illustrious Bishop of Meaux, that St John could not have referred to anything but a Church which corrupted the human race by the sin of prostitution, that is to say, by the errors which it taught; “but,” replies Bossuet, “did not pagan Rome also teach idolatry?”

MYSELF.—How frivolous is this logic! How low we are now descending, after having mounted so high! The more Bossuet labours to refute the charge brought against his communion, the more plain and manifest he renders it in my eyes. But what say you to this assertion of the Catholic Church, that it has never deviated from the faith, and, consequently, never has been unfaithful to God?

THE OFFICER.—We must here have recourse to the principles on which we set out. Holiness is the True and the Good; before she can prove that she has never deviated from the true faith, modern Rome must shew plainly that the good and the true have ever existed in her Church. Now, I fancy that no one imagines that pontifical Rome has never been guilty of infidelity or idolatry. We shall, however, examine this subject, and the digression will be useful before commencing the study of the next chapter, and will enable us to understand it better.

MYSELF.—Besides, the details of the emblems being established, we shall not have many explanations to ask you respecting the words employed—our only embarrassment will be in regard to the *ensemble*.

THE OFFICER.—By Babylon, or Babel, as it is commonly termed in Scripture, we are to understand, according to my view, the love of Ruling through and by the holy things of the Church and of religion, and that, too, for a selfish object. This attempt is an attack on heaven, a usurpation of the Divine prerogative; and, for this reason, it is said of ancient Babel that the summit of the tower erected by her threatened to reach to the skies. Such a love of domination cannot be

exercised without profaning the good, and falsifying the truth of religion. Isaiah speaks at great length, and on many occasions, respecting Babel in this sense alone. In one place he beholds her as the ornament of kingdoms. This means, very plainly, supreme truth. When Babel towers aloft in her pomp and pride, the sun, he says, is shrouded in darkness in the east. This is a striking figure. I shall not, however, accumulate quotations here, but limit myself to those passages where the prophets paint, under the figure of Babylon, the Rule of man over heavenly things. King of Babel, says Isaiah, thy magnificence has been cast down into hell; thou hast said in thy heart, I shall mount even to the heavens; I shall become like unto the Most High. Jehovah, says Jeremiah, has spoken against Babel; how has Babel fallen into desolation amongst the nations! She has acted insolently against Jehovah—against the Holy One of Israel. She is, adds he, the land of idolatry. The same prophet says, in other passages: The golden cup of Babel is in the hand of Jehovah, intoxicating the nations. The nations have drunk of her wine, therefore it is that they are in madness.

MYSELF.—There is no resisting this. We know of no profane city to which this is applicable; and it is very evident that it is a mystical city, or, in a word, the Church, that is here spoken of.

THE OFFICER.—Come out from her, continues Jeremiah, because her judgment has reached even to the heavens. What direct allusions are here plainly visible! The day approaches, adds Jehovah, through the mouth of his prophets—the day approaches when I shall visit the idols of Babel, in order that her land may be in confusion. If Babel mounts to the heavens—if she establishes her throne by force—I will bring on her those who shall lay her waste. What description could be more correct than this of those who establish their own power by using sacred things as a pretext? But let us continue. “I will lull her prophets and wise men to sleep, her chiefs and her arch-priests.” What an energetic expression this to describe the superstitious madness which is ever the accompaniment of such a Rule! Lastly, seeing her fall, Isaiah exclaims: Seat thyself in the dust, daughter of Babel; thou hast no longer a throne; thy wisdom and thy knowledge have seduced thee, when thou hast said in thy heart, There is nothing like unto me—nothing higher.

EUGENE.—What energy of language, and how plainly it sets forth the characteristic of priestly domination!

THE OFFICER.—Destruction, says Isaiah, will come suddenly upon thee. Shut thine eyes; persist in thy sorceries, in the multitude of thy enchantments to which thou hast delivered thyself up from thy childhood; mayhap they will serve thee;

mayhap by them thou wilt become terrible. Now, my friends, if a spirit of religious domination—haughty and superstitious by turns—is not clearly designated here, I do not know what you would have. It is certain, therefore, that St John by Babylon in the Apocalypse means a Church, the leaders of which wish to rule over the things of heaven. Such a domination has been described by the Jewish prophets in the history of their Church. Christianity put an end to this; but Christianity itself, corrupted and degraded in the progress of centuries, has exhibited the same evil, because the heart of man is at all times and in all places the same. Scarcely was this religion established, when learned doctors began to ascribe two natures to our Lord—a divine and a human—and the pontiffs, declaring themselves heirs of this latter, constituted themselves vicars of Jesus, and usurped, it is not too much to say, that power of salvation which belongs only to God. Hence arose that false dominion which Rome has exercised when she professed to absolve from sin, to hold the keys of heaven, and to sell salvation for money. This, I think, you will admit, is making herself God as far as in her power. The Divine Word is God himself; but Rome has kept it back from the people, and has substituted her own decrees for the words of the Holy Book, by her pretensions to infallibility in its interpretation. This is not a groundless accusation, my friends; it is an admitted fact.

MYSELF.—Without doubt; and although this prohibition is not so strictly exercised in these times of religious indifference in which we live, it is yet an historical fact, which no one will attempt to deny. In fact, before the Reformation, the Bible was never placed in the hands of the people, and excommunications were launched against those who were guilty of the frightful crime of giving to the people that moral food which God himself had designed for them.

THE OFFICER.—It is most evident to us that the part played by Christian Rome is the Babylonish domination. The temporal rule of Gregory VII., whatever good it may have produced in other respects, is well known to have been nothing but a sort of human police. But its idolatry is still to be proved. Whilst appearing merely to proclaim saints as such, she really makes them at her pleasure. Now, there is nothing holy, as you are aware, but the Good and the True; and any claim on the part of man to these two Divine attributes is an impious substitution of the creature for the Creator. I am aware that enlightened Roman Catholics refuse to adore saints, and that they look upon them merely as intercessors; but how many simple minds adore them in reality? and it is most certain that the body of the priesthood tolerate this superstition. Everywhere in that Church there are to be found images of

saints, before which the laity piously kneel ; everywhere prayers are addressed to them, as if they were gods who had each their particular jurisdiction. One presides over such a thing, another over another. There are masses said for them, and their relics are held up to the adoration of the faithful. These masses are said in a dead language, which the people have long ceased to understand, and which, consequently, prevents the exercise of the intellect in their worship. Lastly, Rome has tolerated the superstitious idea of a purgatory, from which the faithful can be freed by means of prayers, if they are able to pay for them ; but the torments of which, the poor, who have nothing but their virtues to recommend them, cannot escape, unless their clergyman chooses to assist them gratis. If this mixture of usurped authority and superstition is not a plain cause of religious degeneration, I do not know where we are to look for it.

EUGENE.—I abandon, without regret, the general system of Bossuet's defence. Let us go on to the details, if you please.

THE OFFICER.—One of the angels who hold the seven vials—that is to say, one of the bearers of those Divine influences which the impious call vengeance—announces to St John that he will shew him the great harlot, seated upon the great waters, with whom the kings have lived luxuriously, and who has made drunk the inhabitants of the earth with the wine of her prostitution. You recognise in these expressions the Babel or the Babylon of whom Jeremiah speaks. One must be blind to deny the resemblance. This harlot is plainly, in Scripture language, that religious society which profanes Divine truth. We have already established this meaning of the emblem.

The great waters, which, in other passages, we have seen, were emblematic of Divine truth, plainly mean here infernal falsehoods, since this emblem is connected with that of prostitution. Thus the angel who points out this image to St John, reveals to him the fate of the society which the image represents ; for to point out is to reveal. Babel, says Isaiah, thou who dwellest on the multitude of waters. The Jewish religion had its Babylon ; and as you agree with me that religious institutions, although differing from each other, go through the same phases, Christianity must also have had its Babel. Now, passing in review the history of the Church from the first century until the present time, to what communion can you apply this epithet ? Can there be any profanation more gross than that of employing the dogmas of religion to establish a sway over the minds of men ? The kings of the earth, we have already seen on several occasions, are emblematic of truths ; and who does not see that truths are here profaned ? Daniel, in his vision of the four beasts, says that these monstrous figures are kings ; but one must be alto-

gether insane to seek in profane history for monarchs accoutred in this fashion. The inhabitants of the earth, drunk with this wine, plainly mean the superstitious and erroneous belief of the great majority of the Church. In fact, inasmuch as they do not address themselves to the only God—as they do not read his Word—and as they invoke men like themselves—saints of their own creation—are they not drunken as regards matters of faith? Where can the understanding find anything to satisfy it in such a doctrine? In speaking of people of this description, Isaiah says: They are drunk without wine; and so, indeed, they are, without material wine; but there is another sort of wine which intoxicates. Daughter of Edom, says Jeremiah, this cup shall pass even to thee; thou shalt be intoxicated; and thy nakedness shall be shewn. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes! says Isaiah; woe to those who are heroes, and who drink of the wine! From these emblems, it is plain that an erroneous doctrine is alluded to, as corrupting Divine truth, and intoxicating the intellect.

MYSELF.—It is perfectly plain. In no other way can a religious theory be described which substitutes man for God, which replaces his Word by earthly decrees, and allows the people to remain sunk in superstition. It is plain, also, that a religion is alluded to, for the Apostle adds afterwards, that she is seated on a scarlet-coloured beast, that she is full of names of blasphemy, and that she has seven heads and ten horns. We have already become acquainted with the names of blasphemy, the seven heads and ten horns; but this beast, so highly adorned—what is it?

THE OFFICER.—It is the Word; that is not difficult to guess.

EUGENE.—You are now abusing our credulity. The subject is too grave a one to allow of pleasantry. I am quite willing to be merry with respect to worldly things; but the Divine Word deserves a different treatment. It is God himself! We have already proved it beyond a doubt.

THE OFFICER.—In the innermost essence of immaterial creation, God no doubt is presented under the type form of all others; but in the extremes of the spiritual world, he appears to weak and short-sighted men under the appearance of an incomplete organisation. It is not God who traces these images; it is the recipient who moulds them according to the weakness of his intellect. We established that before, but it seems you have forgotten it. You saw four mysterious animals, in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, represent the Word as it appears in the eyes of spirits who are incapable of comprehending it in its original shape. You saw it, in chapter sixth, represented under the emblem of a white horse. You have already admitted, therefore, that the Word, when seen by extatics in the lowest degrees of the spiritual world, assumes an animal or incomplete

form; and yet you are now annoyed to see it in this form clothed in scarlet! You are certainly rather punctilious.

MYSELF.—The explanation is most satisfactory, my dear Eugene, and cannot be objected to; it is in perfect agreement with the principles we have established. St John does not say that this animal form had garments of scarlet; he says that it was of a scarlet colour itself. Now, is not this the colour of celestial love? And is it not plain that the woman seated on this beast means nothing else but a Church resting on the literal sense of the Divine Word, and borrowing all her strength from it? Does not the Word, in fact, serve as the foundation of all doctrines, even the most false? Is it not a pretext for all errors? St John saw this, he says, in the wilderness; and it is plainly the Church in a state of decline which is described by this figure.

EUGENE.—In fact, when we have admitted that the Lord himself appears to the eyes of the visionary in the form of a lamb, which is certainly an animal also, there is no inconsistency in admitting that, for the feeble and imperfect minds to which he appears under this emblem, the same God may very properly be manifested under another animal form, to express the letter of his Word falsified. This latter animal form is described as assuming the colour of the highest spiritual love; and in that, also, I find nothing to object to.

THE OFFICER.—The woman herself appears clad in purple and scarlet. This dress is worn by a harlot, and therefore we are not to allow ourselves to be caught by it. Her ornaments are gold, precious stones, and pearls; but does not the hypocrite always assume the garb of virtue? When Lazarus, the type of the Gentiles, coveted the crumbs which fell from the table of the rich man, who was the emblem of the Jewish people, the possessors of the Word—is it not said of this latter that he was also clad in purple and fine linen? Thus the garments have nothing to do with the matter. Those, says Jeremiah, who have been seated on the scarlet, have been cast on the dunghill. The same prophet says of his Church in her decline: When thou clothest thyself with scarlet, when thou adornest thyself with ornaments, thou makest thyself beautiful in vain. You see plainly that all these ornaments are only the appearances of the true and the good; for the prophet adds, immediately afterwards, that this woman holds in her hand a golden cup, full of abominations and of the impurity of her fornication. This cup, taken here for the liquor itself, contains, in fact, false and perverting doctrine, notwithstanding the purity of the metal, which is the emblem of love. Are we not forcibly reminded here of those whitened sepulchres of whom our Lord speaks, who outwardly were beautiful, but inwardly full of rotteness? The word which was written on

her forehead, that is to say, the inherent quality of her love, is "mystery." The mystery is that which is concealed within her; and we have seen, my friends, that the secret and fundamental principle of this theory or communion is universal Dominiou by means of holy things.

EUGENE.—In fact, while we must charitably suppose that all the pontiffs have not drank of her cup, we must admit that the principle alluded to seems to have been generally followed in the Roman Catholic Church until the sixteenth century, when she reached the zenith of her power. She has never since completely forgotten the projects she then formed; and when Protestantism wrested from her the half of the civilised world, she organised the Society of Jesuits, for the purpose of again taking possession of her prey—a sort of soldiery of the tiara, of whom it may well be said that their name was mystery, and their aim plainly universal Rule. It is an ingenious mode of criticism, and not without a strong appearance of truth. It is true that the ultramontanists assert that their monarchy is a purely spiritual one; but the real spiritual monarchy, that of the Good and the True, the kingdom of God and the Word which he has bequeathed to us, has no need of the earthly and often impious assistance of men.

MYSELF.—But, after all, the power which she arrogates over the souls of men, that power which is attributed to her of binding and loosing, the vicarship which she asserts is bequeathed to her head, her claim to the exclusive interpretation of Scripture—all this, although plainly indicative of a love of rule, is not exactly a mystery. I can conceive, however, that this desire may be termed a mystery, as being unknown to others. Dupuis says that this word, which has seriously occupied the attention of the learned, signifies simply that the New Jerusalem is an emblem known to the initiated, and unknown to others. According to him, this symbol represents the sublunary world, full of trouble and confusion, destroyed along with its evil genii; while Jerusalem is the image of that brighter and better world which is to rise on its ruins.

THE OFFICER.—Bravo! Why, here is the struggle between good and evil admitted by astronomy itself! In fact, as you say, this sublunary world is full of disorder, while the world above is pure and harmonious. To the scientific investigator everything in nature seems exact, and according to invariable rule. It is only to one who looks at the matter in a religious point of view, that material nature can be supposed to be separated into good and evil, into true and false. Here we have traces of Oriental mysticism. The ancients asserted that souls were corrupted by their connexion with their corporeal organs; they must, therefore, have seen in the phenomena of nature the expression of a primitive truth. If they considered

Babylon as representing the sublunary world, it was because they had previously viewed this world as the emblem of the evil arising from man ; and if they saw in the celestial Jerusalem that better state of things which was to succeed the first, it was because they were convinced that God would one day restore order and harmony to a corrupted world.

MYSELF.—And not only so, but they wrote this truth in the constellations. Let us take the northern hemisphere as the abode of cold and darkness, and the southern hemisphere as the dwelling-place of light and heat, as the ancients believed who placed their Elysium there, and we shall find on the boundary line which separates these two hemispheres a mysterious constellation, the Hydra of Lerna, a monster with seven heads, which, from its serpent form, is an attribute of time and eternity. On the back of this monster is a cup. Macrobius says that this cup is an emblem of that forgetfulness of celestial things which is communicated to those souls who quit the luminous hemisphere for the region of darkness. Is not this a foreshadowing of the cup of abominations of the scarlet woman ?

EUGENE.—In Bossuet's view, also, the word mystery means the spirit of Domination, but of Pagan, not of Papal Rome. This coincidence is curious. The angel in his turn explains all this to St John ; but, like everything else which takes place in a state of extasis, the explanation itself requires a commentary.

THE OFFICER.—St John, seeing the woman drunk with the blood of saints, that is to say, intoxicated with error, is astonished, as many others have been, to see so much ambition manifested inwardly in her, while outwardly she displays so much humility. The angel does away with his astonishment ; he tells him that the animal form under which the Divine Word is seen by those belonging to this communion, is, and is not. These words appear to contain a new mystery, and yet to those who consider them with any attention, they plainly signify that the Word here is recognised, and adored outwardly, while it is not so inwardly. Although adopted as the rule of faith, it is not adopted as the rule of conduct : it must, adds the angel, ascend from the abyss, and perish ; which means, to those who are acquainted with history, that the Divine Word, inasmuch as it is to rise from this abyss of falsehood, must have been previously buried or plunged in it. On several occasions the Roman consistory deliberated as to the propriety of giving the Word to the people ; but this idea was always rejected. I am aware that in the present day the conduct of the Vatican is not so strict in this respect ; but it is not their fault that the human race has been emancipated. Even were this refusal to propagate the Word not true as re-

gards the present time, it is not the less an historical fact. The present times, in fact, belong neither to the Dragon nor to Babylon. Truth has entered on her kingdom, and the New Jerusalem promised by St John has at last descended to earth.

EUGENE.—This is what we shall see in the following chapter, and the only reason why the present time does not exhibit the state of things imaged forth in the vision, is, that this state of things has passed away ; but although now no more, it did exist, and this is proved by the whole history of society during the middle ages. Those who are astonished that the beast which was, and is not, yet survives, only express the same sentiment which we did just now. In fact, it is most surprising that the Word still exists, after so many attempts to corrupt and suppress it. See how those wretched men, whose names are not, indeed, written in the book of life, are confounded at seeing a book preserved which is so offensive to them, and which their divines have never been able to interpret. As to the city seated on the seven mountains, this is plainly Rome built on her seven hills.

THE OFFICER.—It is so, no doubt, in the extremes ; but in the superior degrees, or rather, in spiritual language, these seven mountains are the sum of the Truths and Blessings of the Word on which the Babylonish doctrine is founded. This is so plain, that St John adds subsequently : They are also seven kings. Now, we are aware that kings are the symbolical expression for truths. Of these seven kings, adds St John, five are fallen, one is, the other is not yet come ; and when he is come, he must continue a short space.

MYSELF.—But this appears very enigmatical. I have never met with any explanation of it.

THE OFFICER.—Bossuet looks on these as earthly kings and emperors, gradually decreasing in number from seven till five, leaving one remaining alone, and another who comes after him. But this is a childish abuse of learning. In considering, also, the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, he sees only that Rome which once occupied so lofty a position, then gradually sunk almost into nothingness, and which, nevertheless, still retains its existence, although scarcely more than a name. But here is our explanation :—Five signifies a quality, and does not stand for any precise number. We have seen that it means little. The five kings which have fallen, are the few truths of the Word which had been retained, now sunk in oblivion ; one has remained, namely, that to the Lord belongs all power on heaven and on earth. It required this truth to serve as the foundation for the vicarship of the Pope. Another was to come, and remain for a short space. This is the dogma of the Divine humanity which was proposed by theolo-

gians, but was condemned by the head of the Church, and abandoned.

EUGENE.—In fact, Jansenius promulgated this truth, and his opinions, as every one knows, are looked upon as rather heretical. Is Jansenius, then, also in the Apocalypse? This is rather too much. Look you, my dear friend, you are following here too much in the steps of our commentators; your theoretical principle of the good and the true is the real key of the enigma; your critical interpretation of the Scripture is its true vocabulary. But although you succeed perfectly in explaining the emblems in detail, permit me to tell you that, in the general view of their meaning, you appear to follow a spirit of system which is rather distasteful to me.

MYSELF.—I am entirely of your opinion. I think that the Apocalypse is the description of the corruption of religion, and the re-establishment of a new and better state of things. I adopt your moral theory, and your explanation of the symbolical terms, as being in all points conformable to Scripture; but my whole soul rebels when I am asked to apply these emblems in the mass to Protestants and Roman Catholics. It seems to me that this is following a most vulgar superstition, which breathes nothing but visionary folly and sectarian hatred, and, in short, denotes a narrow and bigoted spirit which belongs neither to the present age nor to the present mode of thinking. There must, assuredly, be other things in heaven than Protestants and Papists.

EUGENE.—Take care, now; you are going rather too far. St John could not have seen in heaven anything else but men actuated more or less by religion. The very exaggeration of your ideas warns me to greater moderation. If the degenerations of the Jewish Church were presented before the eyes of the prophets under the image of objects which existed in this lower world, the state of progressive decline of the Christian Church must also have been seen by St John under the figure of societies which, too, had their existence here below. It seems certainly strange to us that these should be Roman Catholics and Protestants; but suppose the events foreshadowed in the Apocalypse were fulfilled in the year 1853, our grandchildren could not refuse, as it seems to me, to recognise in the two modes of Degradation pointed out by St John, the two great theories or Communions which exist in the present day.

MYSELF.—Thus the matter appears so strange to us only because we are witnesses of the event in fact, those who witness the fulfilment of an event can never persuade themselves of its reality. Recall to mind what the contemporaries of our Saviour said of him: He a prophet! exclaimed they; it is not possible; we know himself and his family. In

the same way we exclaim: Babylon and the Dragon Roman Catholics and Protestants! What extravagance! We live with them, and amongst them, and we cannot perceive that they bear any likeness to the description of St John. I can readily believe that there were profane scoffers in the days when the predictions of Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel were fulfilled, who, in like manner, were greatly astonished to see the incomprehensible events which had been announced to them realised in their own days.

THE OFFICER.—Come, gentlemen, you have differed, and have settled your own differences without my interference. We are separated from the days of the Jews by an interval of two thousand years, and are, therefore, in a position to judge of the events which were fulfilled in their times, although they refused to acknowledge them. The same thing will take place with respect to those who follow us; they will judge whether I am mistaken in my interpretation of the Apocalypse, and whether I err in applying its fulfilment to our own time. I see plainly that your views are not sufficiently decided to enable you to perceive the realisation in the present day of the promised events. It requires a clearer sight than yours to do so, and my commentary, I fear, is in vain.

EUGENE.—But if your interpretation does not lead us to a living faith, it may enable us to form more satisfactory views respecting an event of which, otherwise, we could have no idea. Although we cannot feel that your views contain absolute truth, we admit their probability, and this is a great step.

MYSELF.—By your own confession, my dear sir, it is only posterity, who, looking back on these events which you inform us are now being fulfilled, will be able to pronounce decisively respecting them. As for us, we cannot, in all the strictness of the term, profess a full and hearty faith in what you tell us; if we are to understand by that, a perfect agreement between the thoughts and the affections, the judgment and the feelings. We can only give the adhesion of our intellect. We do not combat your opinions by any direct argument; we merely maintain, and rather flippantly, I admit, that it is very singular this should happen exactly in our own days.

THE OFFICER.—But as men in all ages would find it very odd, just as you do, that these events should happen in their time, the result would be that prophecy would never be fulfilled. Your refusal to accept my proofs is not founded on either reason or logic.

EUGENE.—In fact, this is very true; we can make no objection to what you assert; but, because these incontestable truths take the form of a Gregory VII., a Luther, and a Janisenus, we are obstinately and unreasonably incredulous. Let us cease, then, to look at persons, and let us say, with you:

Christianity has become corrupted—it has degenerated in two ways—it has become a pretext for satisfying the earthly Ambition of one body of Christians—it has served to prostitute and enfeeble the Intellect of another. Who can deny this? Not I, certainly; and, therefore, I shall follow you as attentively as at the beginning.

MYSELF.—I ask pardon, in my turn, for my burst of scepticism. You say that in heaven there is nothing but the good and the true; earthly titles and earthly classifications have no place there. I shall endeavour to accustom myself to view the evil and the false on earth as institutions which have unfortunately only taken too deep a root, and look upon men only as the representatives of these evils and these errors. Their names do not add in the least to the completeness of the drama.

THE OFFICER.—The beast which was, and is not, is the eighth king, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. This still refers to the manner in which the Word is treated by the communion which we are considering. The Word being God himself, and St John not being able to see anything but the connexion existing between God and man, everything he perceives has reference to the Holy Scripture. It is It, as we have seen, which is, and is not. In saying that it is the eighth king, the author means to express that it is itself the source of those Divine truths which are described elsewhere as seven kings. The Word is of the seven, as the seven are of it. As Truth itself, it makes a part of the seven; and, considered as the source of the seven truths, it is thus considered as an eighth, which is the source of all good—eight signifying the good. To go into perdition, signifies to be taken from the people. Viewed as it may by the philosopher, in the eyes of an extatic, to whom the Holy Book is God himself, this step of depriving the people of the Word of God, taken by the Church of Rome on earth, is a mystical event of the highest importance. You smile at the weight which I attach to it in the present day, when, in fact, the Word circulates tolerably freely; but you must imagine to yourself a doctrine founded on the Word alone, and then see this doctrine substituting the decrees of the Vatican for the precepts of Scripture; you must picture to yourself all Europe deprived of a book which alone serves to connect man with his Creator.

EUGENE.—And so completely deprived of it, that, previous to the fifteenth century, there existed no translation in the common tongue in any country of Europe. Imagine all Christendom governed by a code which it could not read! We may be inclined to smile at the absurdity of this; but justice is more inclined to weep; and if Heaven takes any interest in the affairs of this world, it must feel deep displeasure at the sight.

THE OFFICER.—And this displeasure was revealed to St John before the event took place. This is all that I would add to your idea. I now pass to the ten horns, which are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but give their power and strength unto the beast. They shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. These ten kings are the numerous friends of truth, who will not govern the Church, but who, nevertheless, will acknowledge the Divine inspiration of the Word, and place it above the human decisions of the Popes. These friends of truth, although recognising one of the fundamental points of religion, will hesitate to admit the true sense of it; and this is what is signified by the expression, the Lamb shall overcome them—that is to say, will banish their incredulity.

MYSELF.—Thus these ten kings, who have not as yet received a kingdom, are the Jansenists, the Gallicans—in a word, all those who, without separating themselves openly from the Romish Church, yet perceived, with the assistance of their unsophisticated reason and good sense, that the Word is divinely inspired, and that the interpretation could not, therefore, be exclusively confined to the Pope. I presume that, if they permit themselves to be overcome by the Lamb, we may consider them, without difficulty, as the called, the chosen, and the faithful, as St John terms them, with a little prolixity, as it seems to me, for one term would certainly have been sufficient.

THE OFFICER.—There are three degrees in all things, in Divine love as in everything else. Those who enter into the Outward Church only are the Called; those who enter the Interior are the Chosen; and, lastly, those who penetrate into its Essence are the Faithful. Nothing is unmeaning or misplaced in the Holy Book.

EUGENE.—The angel explains the conclusion of the chapter to St John tolerably clearly. He tells him that the waters are the nations; we say, in addition, that they are truths corrupted. It is clear from this that they are truths corrupted by the nations. He informs him that the woman is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. It is not difficult to see from this that she is the Church which has, in fact, humanly speaking, ruled over the Christian world. We might conclude our examination of the chapter here, if it were not for one thing which still embarrasses me a little. These ten horns, St John says, will again appear, which points to a subsequent period; they shall hate the prostitute, shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Does that mean that the Jansenists and Gallicans will begin to wage a spiritual war against Rome, which shall dash her down from the height of her power? If so, take care, for my brain begins again to reel.

THE OFFICER.—When a man, who looks down from the summit of a mountain to the valley beneath, feels his sight fail and his head swim, he leaves his dangerous position, and the abyss no longer affects him. Your mind is disposed to this sort of weakness ; and, consequently, you must, in imagination, place yourself two centuries in advance of the present period, and thus you will be able to judge more calmly. The ten horns, called, in the twelfth verse, ten kings, are employed to designate the mass of those who have left the Romish communion ; for the Apostle uses the word horn alone—the emblem of power—in this passage, and not that of king, which is the symbol of truth. They therefore mean simply a power hostile to Rome ; consequently, in the general aspect, those communions who have separated themselves from her. Do we not see, in fact, that they have rendered desolate and naked that doctrine or church called here the harlot ? The Reformation produced a very plain and striking effect in the sixteenth century ; and now that you can view this event from a distance, you are in a position to judge if it agrees with the prophetic announcement of it. Did not the Protestants, in shaking off the Papal yoke, hate the prostitute ? Did they not assert that they stripped the Romish religion of its superstition ? In destroying this superstitious belief, did they not eat her flesh, as St John here expresses it ? May not the hate they manifested towards her be aptly compared to burning her with fire ? Lastly, in restoring the Word to the people, may they not be said, with great exactness, to have given their kingdom to the beast, since the latter represents the Word ? Here it is not to the spiritual world that we must look, but to our own. An attentive study of history is sufficient to prove the truth of all these assertions.

MYSELF.—You are now rational again ; endeavour, therefore, to sum up this chapter in its historic sense, as you did that which had reference to the Protestants, in order to convince us more fully ; after which we may pass, without hesitation, to the details of the fate of the modern Babylon.

THE OFFICER.—The Christian Church, founded by our Saviour on the Divine Word, was not long in affording man a pretext for erecting an earthly Dominion on her Divine power, as took place with the ancient Babel. Seated in some sort upon the Scripture, and borrowing from it all the attributes which inspire respect and admiration, she perverted its meaning by erroneous interpretations, and at last took away from the people that book which should be a law to all. The good sense of men revolted against this tyranny, and matters came to such a point, that the famous secession called the Reformation took place, by means of which the Holy Book was again placed in the hands of the people, and the vicarship of the

Pope annihilated throughout a considerable portion of Europe. It is impossible to contradict this patent fact. This being the case, I pass now to chapter eighteen, in which we see the fall of Babylon described in detail, so as to make it plain that a Church is meant by it. St John is present in thought at this catastrophe. The angel announces to him that she is fallen, that city, the great Babylon. Isaiah, when describing the fall of Babel, expresses himself as follows: The lion cries as a sentinel, and says, Babel is fallen; she is fallen! Now, similar forms of expression prove, as we have argued, that the impressions received were similar. St John adds: She has become the habitation of devils. It is plain that what is meant here are those evil affections and that thirst for rule by which Babylon is characterised as the prison or the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Birds are employed to designate the thoughts, and here those thoughts, from the epithets used to describe them, are false and impure. Isaiah says, in like manner, that the daughters of the owl shall dwell in Babel. Jeremiah repeats almost the same words.

MYSELF.—If we consider birds—the inhabitants of the air—as symbols of the thoughts, we can explain many passages of fable in which those animals play an important part. The raven of the ark and that of the constellations have ever been looked upon as birds of evil omen. The flight of birds was used as a means of divination; but the Scripture does not seem so plain on this point.

THE OFFICER.—Desolation, says Daniel, will fall upon the bird of abominations. Isaiah, in alluding to the falsities of hell, says: The duck and the pelican, the owl and the raven, will dwell there. And I saw, says Jeremiah, and there was no man to be seen; the birds of heaven had fled away. There is no longer, says Hosea, truth or knowledge of God; the earth, therefore, will weep as to the beast of the field and the bird of the air. Jehovah speaks thus in Isaiah: It is I who am God, calling the bird from the East.

EUGENE.—You have accustomed us to the precision of your vocabulary; and I have no doubt that you can explain, one after the other, all the terms used in the Apocalypse; but even after this is done, there will ever remain some uncertainty respecting the general view you take of it, unless we return to this subject, and endeavour to throw some light on it from time to time. St John, you assert, has described in his book the judgment pronounced upon the Church which had reached its end or consummation in two ways; with regard to that, I have not the least doubt. You say that these two modes of decline are two erroneous theories or doctrines which have come down to our own days. We have

agreed, however, to leave to future generations the task of pronouncing whether the prediction agrees with the event. Our task is simply to prove the probability of this prediction by analogy and reasoning. The chapter which we are considering is full of details which refer to the consummation of a Church; our duty is, therefore, to pass these details in review, and consider them with reference solely to this event. If these details are similar in their character to those alluded to by the prophets at the close of the Jewish religion, we shall be almost entitled to assume that they have a reference to the close of our dispensation. St John repeats here that all the nations of the earth have drunk of the wine of the fornication of the great Babylon, and that the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. You have given us the meaning of these words; you have shewn us the same expressions made use of by Jeremiah when speaking of the ancient Babel; here there is no room for doubt. You have only to make the rest as plain to us. If you will allow me, I will myself point out the passages of St John, and you can strengthen them by quotations from the Old Testament. The merchants of the earth, says St John, have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

MYSELF.—Before our friend, the Officer, shews us these expressions also in the Prophets, I think I can find traces of them in our own history. The traffic arising from indulgences accumulated in the hands of the clergy almost all the treasures of the people. If the Reformation had not placed a limit to Romish avarice, all the kingdoms of Christendom would have become the appanage of the sovereign Pontiff in a temporal, as well as a spiritual point of view. The immense revenues of the clergy date from the period when the merchants of the earth—that is to say, the clergy—enriched themselves by the traffic of their priestly office.

THE OFFICER.—It is my turn now. Isaiah says of the inhabitants of Babel that they had been merchants from their youth up. Ezekiel calls the Jewish Church, when corrupted in the land of Canaan, the land of merchants. In the Word, as we have seen in other places, to traffic is to amass spiritual riches; but the expression bears a bad as well as a good meaning; and this explains the expulsion of the merchants from the temple in the gospel narrative.

EUGENE.—We are now coming to a passage which Protestants have ever hurled against Roman Catholics, even to satiety; it is the following: Come out from her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins. Now, did the Holy Spirit give this advice to the members of the Church which preceded ours?

THE OFFICER.—Jeremiah says, in plain language: My people, come out from the midst of Babylon; in another

passage : Fly from the midst of Babel, and let every one save his soul, lest thou be made known by her iniquity. Isaiah is not less forcible : Come out from Babel, he says ; fly from amongst the Chaldeans.

MYSELF.—In fact, it is a spiritual flight which is here alluded to—the departure from the false and the evil, which dwells in these lands, where the body may rest in perfect peace.

EUGENE.—Vindictive Protestants still repeat, in the words of St John : Reward her even as she rewarded you ; and render unto her double, according to her works ; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

THE OFFICER.—Jeremiah says : Render unto Babel according to her works ; do to her even as she hath done to thee. In another passage he says : Wreak vengeance upon Babel ; treat her even as she hath treated you.

MYSELF.—Very well ; but as vengeance is forbidden, I am clearly of opinion that this cannot be taken in the literal sense, and that we must understand by it that the evil which crime draws upon itself is its own punishment. The wicked man executes upon himself that Divine justice which he has outraged. What he calls vengeance is the sensation of misery which he feels at an event which would prove a blessing to the just man.

THE OFFICER.—You are right ; and when St John adds : Multiply her torments and her sufferings in proportion as she hath elevated herself, the torments which the extatic saw were the torments of hell.

EUGENE.—That can easily be conceived ; but let us continue our parallel. Modern Babylon says of herself : I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Did ancient Babel speak so ?

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah reproaches Babel for having said in her heart : I shall be sovereign for ever ; remark the word “for ever,” how it agrees with the pretension which the Romish Church makes to everlasting dominion. Ancient Babel fell, although she thought herself immortal ; and modern Babel will end in like manner. Even had St John not announced this, the enlightened observer would have come to the same conclusion. St John adds, that the latter will perish by fire : it is clear that this fire expresses that hatred of the truth which will prove her condemnation. Isaiah says of Babel that her gates will be consumed by fire. I shall not explain the following verses ; a simple perusal of them is sufficient. You understand, without difficulty, that those who have corrupted themselves with Babylon will mourn over her—meaning plainly they will mourn for themselves. We have only to read over the text, especially verse eleven, to see the striking

agreement of the prediction with the result : The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. Are not these merchants those who make a traffic of holy things, and whose abominable traffic shall be annihilated ?

EUGENE.—But I fancy that in all ages there have been such merchants. What does Isaiah and Jeremiah say of those of the ancient Babel ?

THE OFFICER.—Babel, says Jeremiah, thou who art so great by thy treasures ; thy end has arrived, even as the measure of thy gain. I shall not dwell upon the articles of merchandise mentioned one after the other by St John ; the extatic, or spiritual vocabulary, has made you acquainted with their meaning, I presume. The merchandise of gold and silver, the precious stones and pearls, denote Spiritual blessings and truths. St John adds fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet ; these are symbols of Celestial blessings and truths. Lastly, in the same verse, he enumerates, in addition, precious woods, vessels of ivory, of brass, of iron, and of marble ; these are Natural blessings and truths. You have thus the three degrees exactly indicated. It is not without reason that the order of the degrees is inverted, and that, in place of commencing by the celestial, St John commences by the spiritual. In fact, with those who are in a corrupted religion, it is not the heart which leads them astray in the first place, but the understanding. In verse thirteen, the enumeration of the merchandise is continued. First of all are mentioned perfumes of every description—the emblems of Spiritual goods and truths in relation to Worship ; all those things previously designated had reference to Doctrine. After the spiritual things of worship come the Celestial, which take as their symbols wine, oil, flour, and wheat. In the third place are presented the Natural things of worship—beasts, sheep ; and, to point out that these things belong to worship through the Word, immediately after are added horses, chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. You will not, I presume, find it necessary to ask the explanation of each of these terms ; we have met them so often before.

EUGENE.—I shall merely remark here, in reference to these souls of men, that they refute Bossuet's system completely. He attempts to prove that the fall of modern Babylon means the ruin of pagan Rome ; but if, amongst the number of things in which the latter trafficked, we may reckon men, we certainly cannot reckon the souls of men. This expression alone is sufficient to prove that the prophet cannot have had anything in view but a Church. I may make the same remark with regard to the devils, of whom Babylon, after her fall, became

the dwelling. That can only be said of a Church unfaithful to God, and not of a political state. Lastly, when St John commands the nations to come out of Babylon, in order not to share in her sin, it is very evident that sin, being a spiritual fault, can only refer to a perverted religion. Sin is never imputed to ignorance.

THE OFFICER.—I do not think there is anything in the remainder of the chapter which requires explanation. A few verses farther on, you see Babylon compared to a maritime town. The emblem of the ship you are already acquainted with : And every ship-master, and all the sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off. Which means, that all the men who navigate the ocean of human opinion, from the highest to the lowest rank, stand aloof from her. You perceive this is quite natural ; the lamentations of those people are true in the spiritual sense as well as in the natural ; they therefore require no explanation. I wish merely to point out to you the analogy which exists between this passage of St John and that where Ezekiel speaks of Tyre : Every sailor, as well as the pilots of the sea, will mourn over thee bitterly. St John afterwards shews us an angel throwing a stone, like a great mill-stone, into the sea, and saying : Thus shall Babylon be thrown down. The stone is truth perverted ; the form which is given to it here, that of a mill-stone, you have not met with before. The following is the explanation of it : Those instruments employed by man in his handicraft have always a signification analogous to the objects for which they are used. The mill serves to prepare the grain ; it signifies, therefore, also the preparation of spiritual food : the Church overthrown is consequently typified by the mill become useless. Jeremiah uses the same language when speaking of Babel : When you have finished reading this book, says he, you will tie a stone to it, and you will say, Thus shall Babel be submerged.

EUGENE.—We can now read the three last verses without assistance. Everywhere the Scripture applies to the fallen Churches of antiquity those expressions which St John applies to Babylon ; the latter, therefore, whatever objections we may feel inclined to make to this theory, is plainly a fallen Church ; and, if so, I ask any man of candour to point out, from the days of St John to our own, any other communion than the Romish one, viewed as regards its principle of Earthly Domination and Power, to which these images and this part can be ascribed. For my part, I cannot perceive any other in past ages or in the present ; and if the Romish Rule is not Babylon, the Apocalyptic emblems, although now written eighteen centuries, have not yet begun to find their application.

MYSELF.—I see plainly that many of the allusions here are applicable to the Rome of the middle ages. The latter has certainly fulfilled the predictions of the Apocalypse ; but the Romish Church of our own days appears to me really too powerless to deserve such fierce denunciations.

THE OFFICER.—If the Roman Catholic religion of our own days has so little vitality, it bears witness, but too plainly perhaps, that the events pictured in the Apocalypse are arriving at their completion. If we acknowledge that the Apocalypse has foretold events the fulfilment of which we can trace clearly in the past, it would be inconsistent in us not to follow out these events to their close, for they must have one. Only admit that the two great Christian communions have been judged above, and the matter is settled. To us the Apocalypse is a judgment ; now a judgment must be exercised on something ; and, from the second century of the Church till our own day, what do you perceive which could have been judged, in a religious point of view, as not being any longer in harmony with purity and religion ? Plainly, nothing but the two theories, or Churches, we have been examining. Conclude, therefore, boldly, that these two degenerate communions have been reprimanded, and, in saying so, you admit that the Apocalypse has been fulfilled. I do not see anything in this calculated to puzzle or bewilder you.

EUGENE.—To prove to us that this Divine reprobation has indeed been pronounced upon them, we have only to look to the almost universal reprobation which men pronounce on them in the present day. Scarcely any one entertains much reverence for either. They are neither independent enough, nor exempt enough from superstition, to satisfy the real friends of truth. Amongst Protestants, there are scarcely any but Socinians in disguise, who hold to morality and leave aside the unintelligible enigmas of the Holy Book and the doctrinal truths it teaches. Amongst the Roman Catholics, the majority resemble the men of the Laodicean Church, mentioned in the counsels to the Churches—they believe from compulsion, from custom, from a wish to conform to the general example, but none from the exercise of his own reason. Their religion—if such a belief can be called one—is a vain and worn-out ceremonial, to which its votaries conform, simply for fear of innovation, or of giving a bad example to the people, or even of going to hell ; for they are not really sure whether the Almighty does not require from them certain formulas and genuflexions as necessary to salvation. Yes, sir, I am firmly convinced that both the great communions into which Christianity is at present divided, are rapidly hastening to their fall. If I become as firmly convinced of the descent of the New Jeru-

saem as I am of this, I shall have no difficulty in believing that the Apocalypse is fulfilled from one end to tho other.

THE OFFICER.—We shall come to that presently ; but first, we are to see the judgment of the two theories or communions in the spiritual world presented in the form of a magnificent drama, of which St John was a spoctator. We must endeavour to understand his description, as we have, I hope, succeeded hitherto in following him.

CHAPTER XII.

Rev., chaps. xix. xx.

THE CLOSE OF THE DRAMA, AND THE SCENE OF ACTION.

MYSELF.—Before we enter on this subject, allow me to cast a glance over what we have previously been examining. With so many emblems in detail, we are obliged to make so many excursions into the realms bordering on our own, that, without frequent recapitulations, it is impossible for us to form any comprehensive idea of what we have seen. In taking this retrospective view, I can perceive four principal divisions of the subject treated of. In the first, which occupies three chapters, we have the counsels given to the Churches by the Saviour himself, who appears in person to his well-beloved disciple. In the second, all is disposed and put in order in the spiritual world for the judgment which is about to be pronounced—both on the Erring, represented by the three horsemen who succeed the rider of the white horse, and on those who are in the Right Faith, typified by the twelve tribes. This second division of the subject embraces four chapters. The third, which is contained in the nine succeeding, places before us the picture of the various errors to which the dogma of Faith without Works leads; while the two which follow are devoted to those of the sacrilegious Rule of Man substituted for God—a theory often unperceived, or denied in its origin—and also the evils which result from it. Looked at from this point of view, the Apocalypse seems to form one luminous plan, and might almost be submitted to the rules of composition laid down by Aristotle. But what are we about to see now in the four chapters which we have still to examine?

THE OFFICER.—Two pictures, which complete the gallery. In the first, we shall see judgment pronounced upon the two communions whose principal vices and errors have been pointed out; in the second, we shall behold the complete establish-

ment on earth of the New Jerusalem ; that is to say, of the religion which is to regenerate those preceding it. It seems to me that it is impossible to proceed with more order and regularity.

EUGENE.—Thus we are about once more to ascend to the spiritual world, and shall no longer be disturbed by the analogies and comparisons which we have hitherto been obliged to make between this spiritual world and the earthly theatre on which the two communions about to be judged take their birth. This puts me much more at my ease. I can form a conception of the invisible world from the simple study of the human heart ; I can read the ingenious emblems there presented to our view, with the aid of the sacred language whose vocabulary I have learned from you. From this study I reap nothing but profit ; there is nothing in it to trouble or embarrass me. We may be deceived respecting Romanism and Protestantism ; they are, perhaps, not exactly conformable to the description given of them, for this must depend on the point of view in which each person is in the habit of looking at human affairs ; but in the spiritual world there is no room for these doubts. Moral truth is one, and indivisible ; and if I can perceive it clearly by the exercise of my intellect, my neighbour who turns, like me, towards the light from which all evidence proceeds, cannot deny it without condemning himself. In this case I deplore his blindness, but my own conviction remains immovable.

THE OFFICER.—This state of mind gives me courage to examine, without reserve, the difficult subjects contained in these two chapters. The first commences with the glorification of the Lord by the angels of heaven ; they adore the Author of all power and all glory, that he has crushed the haughty domination of man, who dared to interpose between his fellow-men and their Creator. You doubtless feel the conviction, with the angels, that the judgments of God are just and true, and that he has purged the earth of the errors into which it was plunged, when men fancied that the power of salvation was placed in the hands of weak and erring mortals like themselves.

MYSELF.—The angels only act as we should be inclined to do, if, after the light of the sun had been hid from us for a lengthened period by thick black clouds, it should again beam forth. We should thank Heaven for dissipating those envious obstacles ; we, too, should chant joyous hallelujahs in honour of that earthly luminary, the noblest emblem of supreme truth. How, think you, could the spiritual world be enlightened and warmed with the Divine love and the Divine wisdom, so long as the haughty Babylon hung over it like a dense and foggy cloud ? We shall, therefore, offer no objection to this

explanation, my dear friend ; the physical world is the symbol of the moral, and I now understand each by the other.

THE OFFICER.—Hallelujah, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies Praise God ; the book of Psalms often employs this term, and it is perfectly natural for St John to use it on this occasion. You will not be astonished to find angels uttering a word of our earthly vocabulary, if you reflect that the book of Psalms, in which it occurs, was written by an extatic. The Apocalypse also speaks of the vengeance of God ; but you are aware that this passion is only imputed to the Lord by erring man, and cannot belong to the Divine essence, which is all love. The day of the last judgment is a day of merey ; but the men who are amenable to Divine justice look on it as a day of the vengeance of the Most High.

EUGENE.—We are already familiar with this use of the term. God never revenges himself, nor is ever angry ; but we are so ourselves. Have I not often seen wretched criminals burning with rage against the calm and impassible judge who metes out to them a law as impassible as himself ? They fancy him filled with wrath, and gratifying a thirst for vengeance ; and if they were to put words in the mouth of this judge, they would represent him as saying : The day of my vengeance has arrived.

THE OFFICER.—It is exactly in this way that Jehovah is made to speak in the Scriptures. Behold, says Isaiah, the day of the vengeance of Jehovah. Isaiah speaks here like the malefactor to whom you allude, because he speaks the language of men. Thus, when he is referring to Babel, he says : I shall wreak my vengeance upon Babel, and I will allow no man to intercede for her. In Deuteronomy we read the following : Ye nations, the people of the Lord, sing because he hath revenged the blood of his servants. After this hymn of the angels, the smoke of the burning of Babylon ascends—to their eyes alone, understand. The representation of the falsities of this religion, thus condemned in its principle, appeared to them instantaneously under its emblematic image of smoke. This is perfectly natural. In the spiritual world, the thought of anything brings the thing itself to view ; and in this way to see the Babylonian superstition like a cloud of smoke, is perfectly admissible. The twenty-four elders mentioned in chapter four, as well as the four living things, reappear here, to confirm the hymn of the angels. These symbolical figures do not change their original signification on this occasion. They still represent the heavens arranged for the judgment. They adore him who is seated on the throne, just as they are represented as doing in chapter four. The same being, and the same emblems, which represented the preparation for the last judgment, are again brought before us when its fulfilment is about to

take place. A voice issuing from the throne says, Praise God. You see here the influence of the Supreme Being descending on grateful hearts, and inviting them to adore and exalt the Lord. This inward, and, as it were, individual influence, is accompanied by the expressions of joy of an infinite multitude of intelligences, which are represented by emblems already familiar to us, namely, the great waters and the mighty thunderings.

EUGENE.—It seems to me that these expressions of gratitude must have been easily perceived by us on an attentive perusal of the passage; and the same remark applies to the following verses. The whole spiritual creation praises God that he had entered upon his kingdom; and, in fact, it is only after evil and error are banished, that love and truth can be said to reign. The marriage of the Lamb is come, adds the celestial song, and his bride hath made herself ready. We, on our part, too, are prepared to see a mystical union—an intellectual marriage between heaven and earth. The Lamb, or the Word, is the intellect which enlightens; the Bride, or the Church, is the affection which receives this light.

THE OFFICER.—Do not let us pass so quickly over the text. We read there: Let us be glad, and rejoice, because the marriage of the Lamb is come. This repetition of two phrases which seem almost synonymous, is not without design. To be glad is the joy of the understanding; to rejoice is the joy of the heart. The Divine marriage is announced in terms similar to those which relate to man himself. Our Saviour refers to this heavenly union when he says: The children of the marriage do not fast so long as the bridegroom is with them; and on this occasion, as he was speaking of himself, it is plain that he is this bridegroom. You see clearly also, that until the judgment of the two communions, who denied the Lord and the manner in which he directly enlightens his Church, was executed, the marriage of the Lamb was not possible. You read also at the close of the verse these words: His bride hath made herself ready. This is meant to announce the coming of that Church which is to succeed those on which judgment had been pronounced. If any one, after this explanation, refuses to see in the Apocalypse the close of two Churches, and the establishment of a third, I despair of any attempt to enlighten or free his understanding.

MICHAEL.—It is as clear as possible, even to the garments, which are said to be of fine linen, typifying the truths with which she is arrayed. St John says that this fine linen represents the righteousness of saints; and, in fact, there are no works good but those which proceed from the truth taught in the Word; all other actions are alloyed with the imperfection of man. The Word alone regenerates, and regeneration is an act of the will, previously conceived in the understanding, when

alightened from on high. The angel addresses St John afterwards in these words: Blessed are those who are called unto the marriage of the Lamb. I can conceive, in fact, that those are indeed blessed who are united to God in heart and spirit. But I do not see why this marriage-feast is to be celebrated at supper rather than at dinuer—why in the evening rather than the morning. Doubtless it refers to some Jewish custom.

THE OFFICER.—The evening repast signifies and represents most exactly the last state of the Church. The morning is its first state; and it is these two states to which Daniel refers when he speaks so often of the visions of the evening and the morning.

MYSELF.—And which Dupuis most irrationally concludes to be astrological observations made at the rising or the setting of the stars.

THE OFFICER.—The morning dawns upon you, inhabitants of the earth, says Ezekiel; and it is quite clear that this morning is allegorical. Sophonia proves it to demonstration: In the morning, says he, Jehovah will give his judgment in open day. In the eleventh book of Samuel, Jehovah is called the light of a morning without clouds. It is quite clear that it is when founding a new Church that these attributes are ascribed to him. A supper, therefore, designates a repast taken at the close of the expiring Church, and before the succeeding one commences. We have seen, in fact, that at the close, or, in figurative language, the evening of the Jewish Church, Jesus supped with his disciples. That emblem, therefore, which preceded the establishment of Christianity, seems most applicable when the New Jerusalem is to be founded; there is nothing here that is not plain and rational.

EUGENE.—In fact, from the commencement of the chapter, we have been on the firmest ground, and I could read the rest of it without any embarrassment, I fancy, if it were not for one point which puzzles me no little. St John, we are told, fell at the angel's feet to worship him: but the angel tells him not to do so, for that he is the servant of God like himself.

MYSELF.—If it is forbidden to throw one's self at the feet of any being in heaven, it certainly is not so on earth; does not the Pope require the faithful to kiss his slipper? If he had read this passage as he ought to have done, he would have reminded his servile worshippers of those words of the angel's to St John. In truth, it is worthy of our highest admiration to see it proclaimed in so few words that even the angels of heaven have nothing Divine in themselves, and that they are, like us, simple recipients of the Divine light. It would furnish matter for a noble chapter of philosophy. What now becomes of those poetic fancies which represent these angels as a spe-

cies of demigods, beings of a different nature from ours, and intermediate between man and God ?

EUGENE.—In this point of view, I admit, it is a most lofty and sublime idea ; but, if considered in another light, the effect is very different. St John, you must allow, knew that as well as we ; and why, then, does he thus thoughtlessly attempt to throw himself at the feet of a creature like himself ?

THE OFFICER.—This difficulty which you suggest is an undoubted proof of the veracity of the extatic. He is not a man calling up a picture in imagination, composing an allegory, or weaving together a romance. He is a *seer*, and, without analysing his sensations, he informs us of what he saw. The Lord had appeared to him several times, as we have seen in the course of the narrative, and on this occasion he takes the minister of the Most High for the Almighty himself—an unequivocal proof that he was under the influence of sensations which were beyond his power to direct or calculate. This is no real obstacle, therefore. But, before passing on to another subject, I would direct your attention to the latter words of the angel to St John. The spirit of prophecy, he says, is the testimony of Jesus. Do you not see in these words a sanction given to that state of extasis which I, too, presented to you as the evidence of spiritual truth ? To refuse your assent to these words is to reject all evidence. It is from this that Prophecy in the Scriptures everywhere means of the Word itself, for it is the spirit, when freed from its earthly condition, that alone can see it in its original purity. Observe, in the meantime, how true these words of our Saviour are : I receive the testimony of no man. In fact, man, if not enlightened by the Divine Spirit, cannot hear any testimony to the being and attributes of God. In the Gospel of St John we find these same words, to which I would direct your most earnest attention : The Spirit of Truth, which is the Holy Ghost, shall bear witness of the Lord ; and he shall not speak of himself, but he will speak of the things which he shall receive from the Lord, and he will announce them. After this plain declaration, will any one deny that religion has been established by means of the spiritual communications of extatics, and that no one can comprehend its nature in the present day except by the aid of a doctrine furnished by extatics ?

MYSELF.—I have never met with anything more clearly proved. The farther we proceed, gentlemen, the more are we dazzled with light, and the more do we acquire full and absolute certainty. This chapter ends by a vision, which, if you please, we shall examine attentively. But, in the first place, I would call your attention to the fact, that those hallelujahs which were sung by the heavenly host, correspond to the festivals celebrated by the Romans under the name of *Hilaria*,

and which evidently had reference to the return of spring. In all the nations of Asia, festivals of this kind were instituted at the spring equinox, the period of the triumphal appearance of the Lamb of the constellations. It is gratifying to perceive this great victory thus proclaimed by the Ancient revelation. The one which we have received again makes mention of it, for the simple reason that successive Churches experience the same phases of decline and renovation, which, of course, are represented by the same images.

THE OFFICER.—After this, says St John, I saw the heavens opened, and beheld a white horse. I do not require to tell you now that this is the symbol of pure intellect, the inner sense of the Word; you are by this time accustomed to look on the Word as God himself; it is he, therefore, who manifests himself here to the prophet. He who was seated on the horse, says St John, was called Faithful and True—that is to say, the Good and the Truth—and in righteousness he doth judge and make war; in fact, the Word judges every man, and this judgment which separates the good from the wicked assumes the appearance of a spiritual warfare. This horseman had many crowns on his head, and we have seen that these symbols signify the Divine truths of the Word.

EUGENE.—This is very well, but you have just said that he is called the Faithful and the True; these are his two names, and yet St John adds here that he had a name that no man knew but he himself.

THE OFFICER.—Men may call him the Faithful and the True, but his real name, that is to say, his essence, cannot be known by any but himself. Man gives a name to everything which surrounds him; God alone cannot receive one from the works of his hands. In the following verse, after having represented him as clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, which signifies the Word outraged and violated, the extatic adds that his name is called The Word of God. Thus you see God thrice named, then without a name, and afterwards assuming a designation; but you see clearly that as this latter name refers to the Divine manifestation—in a word, to the revelation—it in no way changes the truth of the assertion that no one knows the real name of God but God himself. In fact, the Word, which contains his Spirit, does it inspire light in him who does not receive this Spirit?

MYSELF.—This blood-stained garment is very appropriate to the circumstances of the case; in fact, we see the Divine Word everywhere outraged, and its interior sense misconstrued. The Roman Catholics refuse to recognise the Divine humanity of the Lord, and interpret the Scriptures according to the decisions of the Pope; while the Protestants look upon the humanity of the Lord as not divine either, and, inasmuch as

they reduce the whole of morality to faith alone, they attach no importance to the precepts of Scripture.

THE OFFICER.—Isaiah saw the same state of things prevailing amongst the Jews, who, believing that the Word was written for them alone, looked for a Messiah who was to raise their nation to a temporal supremacy over all others. Who, says this prophet, is he who cometh from Edom and Bozrah, with garments dipped in blood?

EUGENE.—We are already familiar with all the rest of the emblems. The armies on white horses, clad in garments of fine linen, white and clean, are those who are enlightened by the pure knowledge of the Word. The two-edged sword has been already explained in the first chapter; and the rod of iron, or the literal sense of the Word, we have met with frequently. We say ourselves of one who rules over a nation without explaining his motives or conduct, that he rules them with a rod of iron. We are also well acquainted with the emblem of the wine-press, the wine, and the fierceness and the wrath of the Almighty.

MYSELF.—But how is the Lord to tread this wine-press? I do not exactly see the meaning of this symbol.

THE OFFICER.—The wine of the fierceness and wrath of God is truth outraged—that truth which forms the torment of the impious, a torment which the impious attribute, as we are aware, to the Author of all truth. Our Saviour, therefore, in combating these falsities, and banishing them from the heart of man, tramples them down as the wine-press crushes the grapes. Isaiah, when describing, in like manner, the Divine dealings towards the Jewish Church, says: Your garments are like those of the man who treads down the wine-press. The prophet here speaks of God, and, in concluding the sentence, he changes the person, as is so frequently done by exotics, and makes the Lord speak himself: I alone have trod down the wine-press. I need scarcely direct your attention to this fact, that the expressions employed by the Jewish prophets to symbolise the Divine operation which took place at the end of their Church, are very naturally adopted by the Christian prophet when alluding to the events which mark the close of his. If the words of St John do not apply to the consummation of a Church, no more do those of Isaiah; and to maintain this last position would be an absurdity.

MYSELF.—I have no intention to dispute this fact; but here we again meet with the name of the Lord, which has been already proclaimed, hidden, and revealed, and which is here mentioned for the fourth time. He hath, says St John, on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There are many things in this passage which require explanation. In the first place, this mention of the

name for the fourth time denotes either a want of method or of memory ; but extatics, I believe, do not pique themselves on those qualities ; in the second place, names are not usually written on garments, and I have never heard of them being written on the thigh ; and, lastly, the term King of Kings is quite sufficient, I think, to give a high idea of any personage, without adding to it Lord of Lords, which seems to me only calculated to weaken the original idea.

THE OFFICER.—You have ceased, I see, to ask the meaning of the emblems ; you are now sufficiently acquainted with them to criticise them ! How am I to meet antagonists who shift their ground like a weathercock, and never stick to the point on which they challenged you ? I promised to give you the hidden sense of the Apocalyptic symbols ; but did I ever engage to submit this book to our conventional rules of composition ? The language of a dream or vision is not the same as that employed by a man writing tranquilly in his closet.

EUGENE.—I admit that it is quite unjust to require this exactness from an extatic. How should we have managed with our locusts in chapter nine, if we had examined attentively whether the armour fitted to their corslets, or if the women's long hair harmonised with their little heads ? We have already seen that these images disappear from the extatic's mind almost as soon as they are formed, and the same remark applies to those we are now examining.

THE OFFICER.—The Garment of the Lord is the Divine Truth of the Word ; the Thigh is the Divine Good contained in it ; consequently, the meaning of these two emblems thus connected is that Jesus Christ is King of Kings—that is to say, Truth of Truths, and also the Lord of Lords, which means that Good which surpasses all other Goods. In every case, where these repetitions which annoy you are employed, they are the necessary indication of the union of the Good and the True.

MYSELF.—That seems reasonable enough ; but, to shew that there is nothing arbitrary in your explanations, you must explain to us why the thigh is taken as the emblem of good. I see no analogy between them.

THE OFFICER.—The thighs and the loins in the Word are always taken for the symbol of conjugal love—that love which is the foundation of all others, and which the Creator has employed as the emblem of the holiest of all unions ; namely, the union between the Church and the Word. The Word is the bridegroom ; and in this sense it may be said that his name is written on his thigh. Isaiah, besides, has employed this image : Justice, he says, in speaking of the Lord, will be the girdle of his loins, and Truth the girdle of his thighs. Ezekiel speaks of a man who appeared from the loins downward like a flaming fire ; this was the appearance of Divine

love. Daniel, in like manner, saw a man whose loins were girt about with a girdle of the gold of Uphaz—the symbol of the good arising from love. You see, therefore, that it is not so extraordinary to behold the characteristic of the Word, or the Bridegroom, associated in St John's mind with that portion of the human form which is emblematic of love. Amongst the ancients, as we have said, there was no false shame attached, as is the case with us, to this symbol, which religion had hallowed and consecrated; it was only when man fell into evil that he became ashamed of his nakedness.

MYSELF.—This is exactly what Genesis says in speaking of our first parents. Can you explain it to me, if you please?

THE OFFICER.—The great spiritual organisation, we agreed before commencing our commentary, is formed on the model of the human frame, since God is man himself. The corporeal organs of man, which suggest to our minds none but animal functions, were employed by man before his fall as necessary symbols of the intellectual functions; for I again repeat, it is the Good and the True which are the vital principles of all things. The portion of the human frame, therefore, which we are considering, must have had a moral signification like all others. Even our sensual ideas attach to the forehead an idea of celestial love; and to the arm the signification of power. Why, then, in a state of innocence, should we not have symbolised, in like manner, the sexual organs? It was only when we became sensual that we ceased to recognise the moral signification of the different organs of the human body, and, to use the language of Scripture, were ashamed of our nakedness. We blush for ourselves, because, having banished God from our hearts, we behold in our organs, not the instruments of his love, but the means of gratifying our own passions.

EUGENE.—I have often endeavoured to explain to myself the origin of modesty, but always without success. Your observation throws a new light on the subject. Modesty is that cry of the soul which it gives when, feeling itself made for immortality, it grieves to be obliged to descend to the senses. It is necessary that it should descend, as the superior degree to the lower; but, having descended, it is not necessary that it should forget the origin from whence it sprung. In a word, modesty arises from the fact, that man feels unmistakeably that he is in the lowest degree, and totally separated from the others. In celestial love, we are without shame, like innocence; in the love of self carried to the lowest degree, we blush like criminals. There is room for a whole life's meditation in a few words of the Apocalypse.

MYSELF.—Let us come to the facts, however, or we shall never have done. An angel standing in the sun, cries with a loud voice to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven to

gather themselves together unto the supper of the Great God, to eat the flesh of kings and of captains, and of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond. This I can easily understand. I am much more at my ease with symbols than with words taken in their ordinary acceptation. You have told us that to extatics God appears like a man, and that the sphere which emanates from him forms a real spiritual sun, of which he occupies the centre. St John only re-employs these two symbols, which were well known to the ancients. The celestial sphere of the Persians personified the sun as the constellation of Perseus, and beneath it wrote these words:— "*Juvenis in sole sedens.*" The horseman whom we have seen is no other than the emblem of the sun, as the conqueror of darkness in the spring equinox. The Persians represented their mediator Mythra in the same way; they gave him the same names which St John applies to our Saviour—that is to say, the Faithful and the True. The Romans preserved the memory of these ancient traditions. With them, at the spring equinox, amongst other ceremonies in honour of the sun's return, a young man without a beard was led in procession, seated on horseback. The birds of heaven, which are invited to the supper, are those who have a spiritual affection for the truth; they are invited to sup with God—that is to say, to unite themselves to him, as we have seen at the marriage-feast of the Lamb. Lastly, the flesh which they are to eat are the truths which they are to appropriate to themselves; the kings are the supreme truths; the mighty men, the understanding of the Word; the horsemen, the wisdom resulting from this knowledge; the freemen and slaves are, doubtless, free or captive minds.

THE OFFICER.—The freemen are those who know through themselves; the slaves are those who only know through others. In general parlance, these latter are called servile minds; and the term, you see, is well applied. I am glad to see that you have not attempted to speak jestingly of this supper, and these different descriptions of flesh which God provides at it. To any well-constituted mind, a single passage like the present is sufficient to demonstrate the necessity of having recourse to a spiritual meaning, in order to explain the Scriptures. Ezekiel expresses himself as follows: Tell the bird of every kind, and every beast of burden, Gather together round my great sacrifice, that you may eat the flesh and drink the blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and you shall drink the blood of the princes of the earth. At my table you will be filled full of the flesh of horses, of chariots, and of every man of war. The flesh and the blood signify clearly and evidently here the Good and the True, the same signification which they have in the Lord's Supper.

EUGENE.—Thus, when we communicate, we receive under the two emblems the flesh and the blood of the Lord ; but this flesh and this blood mean nothing more than what Ezekiel and St John refer to, and are simply the good arising from the love, and the truth founded on the wisdom of God. In this point of view the Lord's Supper is a most admirable institution.

MYSELF.—We are now at the end of the chapter. Evil again appears under the figure of the beast, and good under that of the rider of the white horse ; the latter is the conqueror, and this portion of the chapter serves to usher in the next. Indeed the two really make but one. This symbolic event has been represented in all the legends and monuments of antiquity. They all tell us of heroes coming to deliver beauty or innocence from some monster, and the greater part of these heroes are mounted upon horses. You will at once recall to mind the romances of chivalry in which frequent allusions are made to this universal tradition. In the heathen mythology, we read of the victory of Perseus over the monster which was about to devour Andromeda ; and the framers of the celestial chart have placed this conqueror and the victim whom he delivered amongst the constellations. At all periods there have been Divine judgments, and, consequently, the victory of the principle of Good over that of Evil ; and in all ages, Evil has been cast down into hell. St John must therefore have seen at the close of this period what had been seen at the close of all the preceding epochs. We affirm here that this beast and this false prophet mean the doctrine of Faith Alone ; but I am fully convinced that the ancients, when describing the evils which alienated man from God, must also have seen this barren faith appear in the dread catalogue. It is an evil common to all ages, and must therefore require the same emblem on each occasion it is referred to. The extatic beholds them thrown into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and this lake is, in his eyes, the representation of hell. Fire is the emblem of infernal love ; and sulphur, as we have seen, is that of the thirst of falsehood which results from it. Birds are again introduced as feeding on their flesh ; but here I feel rather puzzled ; for, if I mistake not, the flesh of the beast and the false prophet are not the Good and the True.

THE OFFICER.—Doubtless they are not, and the birds which devour them are not the same which we saw just now summoned to the supper of God. The extatic here has hell, or, if you like the phrase better, the opposite of heaven, presented to his view, and, therefore, sees its falsities represented by birds, as the truths were in heaven by the same class of animals. The birds which he sees here, therefore, are the infernal falsities greedily devouring those errors which are kindred to their

nature; and which, consequently, are found by them to be their suitable food.

EUGENE.—I can easily conceive this. But we have now arrived at the chapter which terminates the judgment. This chapter is in itself a drama of a highly original character. The ideas it contains have given rise to the strange opinion of the Millenarians, who believe that Jesus Christ will appear again on earth, and reign with his martyrs one thousand years, in his rebuilt Jerusalem. It was this opinion, gentlemen, which, fermenting in ignorant minds, agitated Europe so deeply in the middle ages, and contributed to those wonderful expeditions in which the entire of Europe rushed, as it were, like a single man, to invade the realms of Asia. The germ of the Crusades is contained in a chapter of the Apocalypse, and this ought to serve as an additional incentive to the study of a book which could exercise such a wonderful influence, even in a superstitious point of view, on men's minds. Bossuet admits that this chapter cannot refer to earthly events, and that it can only be explained in a spiritual sense; no one, therefore, will be disposed to reject your interpretation as belonging to the latter class.

MYSELF.—For my part, I find in this same chapter the ideas of the pagan philosophers respecting the fate of the soul after death; and if the words of St John, as well as the statements of those philosophers, are conformable to truth, we must admit that both have been illuminated by the same light. St John was directly enlightened by Divine revelation, and the philosophers who agree with him inherited, by tradition, the dogmas of the primitive revelation.

THE OFFICER.—As I see you are disposed to grant me your whole attention, I shall at once proceed. St John saw an angel descending from heaven, holding the key of the bottomless pit. This is very simple. The judgment is ended, and the extatic, of course, sees the wicked cast into the place which awaits them. Besides the key, which is a familiar emblem to us, the angel holds in his hand also a great chain. The key opens or shuts, but the action of binding or loosing requires an emblem of its own, and this is naturally the chain. The angel had neither one nor other of these instruments really in his hand; but, as we have so frequently repeated, the extatic can have no idea which does not assume a form. It is for this reason that evil and falsehood are again represented to his eyes under the form of the dragon—that old serpent who, he says, is the Devil and Satan. This monster is taken and bound for a thousand years.

EUGENE.—Why not for ever? Let us examine this expression; for, if taken literally, it would render the superstitious belief in the millennium very excusable.

THE OFFICER.—In the symbolic signification of numbers, a thousand never means a precise number ; it simply signifies what we should call "some time." But in the figurative language of visionaries, this really means not a time, but a state, because there is no such thing as time, properly so called, in heaven. The phrase, therefore, may be reduced to this : evil, or the being who represents its collective capacity, was placed in a certain state of inaction. You can readily conceive of the Divine influence acting thus when assisting the good to separate from the wicked ; the latter, in this state of abandonment or inaction, may be said to be tied, and, being thus tied, they appear to the extatic as if thrown into an abyss, and this abyss scaled over them. In the same manner, we ourselves believe that in a state of things on earth analogous to this, crime is reduced to hide its head, and will thenceforward be afraid of action. St John says that it is to be bound until the thousand years are fulfilled, and after that, must be loosed for a little season. The meaning of this may be gathered from our first explanation. After having been reduced to a temporary state of inaction, to allow of a peculiar operation being accomplished, evil will naturally unbind itself by degrees—that is to say, will resume its own love and its own life, when the Divine influence no longer acts on it in such a way as to deprive it of whatever good it might have had in its composition.

MYSELF.—Your meaning, I presume, is as follows :—That while the good are separated from their evil companions, the latter remain motionless during this operation, which in some measure paralyzes them ; but when this operation is effected, the rebellious crew resume their former life and daring. In fact, it seems a very natural operation in a judgment such as the one we are examining. Ancient revelation emblazoned this symbol also in the heavens ; we there see the conquering Lamb leading his elect into the luminous region which he inhabits, and whilst this is being done, the autumnal serpent, unchained like the gloomy winter, is reduced to powerlessness. These are the thousand years during which he is bound. He is afterwards unbound, continues the holy text ; and, in fact, everything is progressive in the physical as in the moral world ; the serpent, although so strongly bound, again assumes the empire of evil—that is to say, of darkness and winter. In the following spring, he again experiences total defeat. In fact, we might conclude that this was pure astronomy, if the Apocalypse did not speak of another life, and of the second death, which are certainly not in the celestial chart.

THE OFFICER.—Evil being thus bound, and the good being separated, you see judgment at once pronounced upon these latter. St John beholds thrones, and power given to those who sit upon them to judge. You are aware that the throne

is the preparation and the indication of a judgment. He sees also the souls of those who were beheaded for the testimony they had given to Jesus.

EUGENE.—You must confess that it was very natural for Bossuet to see in these the poor martyrs who suffered under Diocletian, an immense number of whom were, in fact, beheaded.

THE OFFICER.—But do you not see much more plainly that they are those who, having given their testimony to evangelical truth, were rejected from the bosom of that communion which had falsified its dogmas, and were persecuted by it? This testimony, we have everywhere seen, is the recognition of the Word as divine. In chapter sixth, you saw these same souls crying aloud for vengeance, and to them were given white robes, and they were told to wait for a little season; this season is now come, and these are not new actors who claim our attention. St John, moreover, explains fully respecting these souls, when he says that they are those who did not adore the beast, nor honour his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. You understand clearly that the life meant there is the spiritual life. This, then, is the origin of the belief of the Millenarians; and never, surely, was there one more wholly without foundation. Those who are with Jesus are said to be souls; and this plainly refutes the opinion of an earthly sojourn. In the second place, these thousand years are for them a state of peace—that is to say, a state of union with Divine truth. This is what is meant by the word “reign.” Nothing but Truth can be said to reign, in the rigorous sense of the term; and it is for this reason that the friends of Truth are called kings from one end of the Bible to the other.

MYSELF.—This is quite clear respecting these dead, but the text immediately afterwards adds: But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This, says St John, is the first resurrection. Now, the poor Millenarians, it seems to me, were very excusable in concluding from this passage that a certain number of the dead should be raised before the general resurrection, and reign on the earth for a thousand years.

THE OFFICER.—Amongst those dead, or, if you like the phrase better, those who have been excluded from the communion we referred to, are some upon whom the eternal verdict had not been pronounced; and it is necessary, therefore, that they should first undergo that state of life which is designated by the thousand years.

EUGENE.—But it seems to me you refine rather too much here, my dear sir. What would it have cost God to make this

examination at once over the whole earth ? Why admit some at once, and make the others wait for a thousand years ?

THE OFFICER.—This examination or judgment seems to proceed from God ; but we are aware that, in reality, it is man who himself approaches, or removes from, his Creator. Thus it is his sin which casts him down into hell, just as it is his goodness which raises him to heaven. God appears to judge him, but it is he who judges himself. Now, as the operation of throwing off the errors and sins acquired in the world is more tedious with some than with others, is it not quite natural to say that these are admitted sooner, and the others later ? Amongst the elect there are some whose union with God is immediate, and others who cannot effect this union until after a certain state of trial and temptation ; or, in a word, undergoing that intermediate state which St John terms, very happily, a thousand years. This, he adds, as the natural conclusion of what he had said before, is the first resurrection. In fact, the resurrection for man means simply the act of uniting himself to God, and this takes place either immediately, like the first class of whom we are speaking, or after being previously cleansed from earthly impurities, like the second class. Do not imagine from this that there is really a second resurrection in point of time. The one called first is not so in numerical order, but the first in importance—that is, the principal one.

EUGENE.—In fact, I can readily conceive this. All men are resuscitated, as regards the soul, immediately after the death of the body ; but this resurrection, which takes place alike for the wicked as for the good, is not the principal one. The real resurrection is that which leads us to die to selfishness and be restored to life in God. This is a resurrection in all the force of the term, and is therefore well called the first. Thanks to your explanation, I can now exclaim with St John : Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection ! The second death, adds the prophet, hath no power over such. In fact, what second death have we to fear after our perishable body is reduced to dust, but the condemnation of the soul—the real, the spiritual death ? It is quite necessary, too, that this should be distinguished as the second death, since men call that the first which frees them from the bonds of matter and time. I feel my mind also freeing itself, as we proceed, from the bonds which held it enchained, and I am surprised to find myself reading with ease the most difficult chapter of the most incomprehensible book that ever issued from the hands of man.

MYSELF.—In fact, this theory is much more simple than the idea which the ancients entertained respecting this twofold death. According to Plato, the souls of men after death were

transported to a region situated between heaven and earth, and this journey occupied a thousand years ; so that, in consequence of this lengthened interval, the final judgment pronounced upon them did not take place until a thousand years after their death. This thousand years, as you see, is met with in other books besides the Apocalypse. The second death is also spoken of in Plutarch. Pure souls, he says, are immediately reunited to their Original Principle, whilst the others descend again by their own weight to earth, and there animate new bodies. This was to them the second death. The ideas, certainly, are not the same in both cases, but the terms employed are identical. We see that the writings of the pagans, as well as the Apocalypse, speak of an interval of a thousand years as taking place between death and the judgment, and that both make mention of a first resurrection and of a second death. To find the common origin of these two opinions, my friends, we must plunge deeply into the Ancient revelation ; there alone is it to be found, for extasis has ever spoken the same language. Plato and Plutarch are only the echo of Oriental tradition, and this, as you are aware, leads us back to extatic or spiritual communication.

EUGENE.—I can now conceive how men, finding the sacred author speak of a first resurrection, came to the conclusion that there must necessarily be a second. Thus, those spirits on whom the second death shall have no power, and who shall reign as kings and priests of God and of Christ, will not really reign with him for a thousand years, as the text expresses it, but will be in a certain state of union with him, varying according to circumstances. This is very satisfactory ; but this state of mind, which, with the just, is lasting, is not so with the wicked ; for St John adds, immediately afterwards, that after the thousand years are accomplished, Satan shall be loosed, and shall go out to deceive the nations, Gog and Magog, and gather them together to battle.

THE OFFICER.—The extatic, passing from the present to the future, beholds this innumerable army arrayed in order of battle. They went up, he says, on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city ; but God rained down fire, which devoured them ; and the devil, that deceived them, was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, with the beast and the false prophet.

EUGENE.—What strange ideas the Millenarians have formed respecting this scene ! They have imagined the Saviour, having returned to earth with his martyrs, reigning a thousand years at Jerusalem, and all this immense army coming to besiege the holy city. How ready is the imagination to form extravagant ideas ! Will you explain this scene to us, my dear sir, for it well deserves a commentary ?

THE OFFICER.—It is perfectly simple. Always remember that the scene takes place in the spiritual world. Satan is set at liberty again, after the expiration of a thousand years; that is to say, that, after the state of constraint and powerlessness in which it was left by the defection of its members, the great spiritual body, called the devil, returns to the exercise of its ruling passion. And what use can it make of this liberty except to shew its hatred to virtue? Is not this hatred its whole life?—has it not become rooted in this evil habit? It seduces the nations—that is, it inspires them with its errors; for what passion is there, as we have said, which is not led to seek those that sympathise with it? Since evil exists in the spiritual world, it must necessarily exercise an influence as evil as itself. If this evil appears to extatics in the shape of a monstrous being, the impure thoughts which are connected with it must also seem to them so many different beings associating themselves with the first. This gathering together, and this spiritual combat, are most real phenomena, for they exist on earth in men's minds. These evil spirits surround the camp of the saints; and is not this a striking image of good and truth, besieged, as it were, by error? and is not the well-beloved city a natural emblem of the doctrine of the true and the good itself? Is there any other city except this symbolic one, which is beloved by God to the exclusion of all others?

MYSELF.—Why, this is as clear in your interpretation as it is puzzling in the text. You say nothing, however, of Gog and Magog, who, by the way, are frequently mentioned in Scripture. What is meant by these two personages?

THE OFFICER.—These are the men who are in external worship only. The 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel are merely an allegory of this outward worship, symbolised by these same names. Gog and Magog there wage a war, as they do in the Apocalypse, against inward truth, the only truth which is of any value in the eyes of God. The sacrilegious usurpation of a purely outward worship over a worship of the heart and spirit, is there imaged forth by a battle; and the first-mentioned worship meets with a defeat, as must ever be the case when the Lord founds a Church. Ezekiel, when beholding Gog and Magog warring against the Saviour, at the close of the Jewish Church, sees the Redeemer victorious over them at this period; and St John naturally sees the same struggle and the same victory when witnessing the close of those purely outward communions which had established themselves in Christianity, and the foundation of that New Church which is to restore the unalloyed worship of the heart.

MYSELF.—It only required these terms, Gog and Magog,

which are here applied to the two fallen Churches, to complete their description. These two communions have indeed temples, in which God is prayed to, and in which the sacraments of the Church are performed; but what is never considered by them, or, at least, what is looked on as a matter of secondary importance, is the regeneration of the mind and heart. Indeed men have come to be scarcely aware that the whole of religion consists in this regeneration; they are satisfied to practise the outward forms, and know nothing of the inward life. And may we not say, with great truth, that the majority of the world, at this moment, are in this state?

THE OFFICER.—St John, therefore, tells you that their number is as the sand of the sea. Ezekiel speaks in the same manner of Gog. The valley of their burial-place, he says, is called the multitude of Gog, and the name of the city in which they dwell is called Multitude.

EUGENE.—It is the name of ours also. Over it, too, Gog and Magog reign; of that there is not the slightest doubt. I can now understand why the fire from heaven consumed Gog and his army. There is nothing, in fact, in the nature of outward worship, to preserve the heart of man from becoming the prey of sinful passions. No matter what the nature of outward ceremonies may be, the observer of them may still remain in evil, and make no effort to banish it from his breast.

THE OFFICER.—It is said also in Ezekiel: I will rain down fire and sulphur upon Gog; and elsewhere, he repeats: I will send fire upon Magog. You see, therefore, a close and unvarying parallel between the events announced at the close of the two Churches. Those who have considered this chapter of the Apocalypse as indicating the end of the world, have not exercised their reason; to borrow an expression of St John, they have covered their eyes as if with a bandage.

MYSELF.—Such a conclusion is entirely opposed to reason. To look thus for the end of the world is an outrage on the goodness of the Creator, whose essence is love, and whose attributes are eternity and universality. I much prefer following your interpretation, and looking on this as the close of a Church which had become degenerate, and the foundation of a new one. Taking this view of the subject, the universe still rolls on in all its beauty and grandeur; it is only the human heart that changes; and, it must be confessed, this is a much more rational idea. It required, indeed, the breath of the Deity to give a new existence to that lifeless corpse which is at the present day called Religion. If this new soul is what you term the New Jerusalem, I am quite disposed to welcome it; for, in truth, we require it greatly.

THE OFFICER.—You shall see it appear immediately; but, first of all, let us dwell for an instant upon the symbols here

seen by St John. Gog and Magog, the beast, the dragon, the false prophet, in short, all those superstitions or sins of the old religion, being cast into a lake burning with infernal love and its lusts, the Apostle beholds a great white throne. The colour of this throne proves to you clearly that the clouds which were interposed between it and the spiritual world are dissipated. At the sight of Him who was seated on the throne, the heaven and the earth fled away. You see plainly, that unless we are to banish reason altogether, we cannot say that, at the presence of God, who animates and preserves all things, the material heaven and earth can possibly flee away.

MYSELF.—We are, therefore, absolutely forced to give a different interpretation to this passage, for St John emphatically adds that there was found no place for them.

THE OFFICER.—Out of the region of time and space, in fact, there does not remain even a place for those diabolical representations which are ever attendant on the thought of Evil, when Good comes to take their place. The spiritual heaven and the spiritual earth appear to those who cherish an affection for them. All these mighty revelations are in reality representations of what takes place in our thoughts. To us one mental creation succeeds another, and, if we were in a state of vision, this mental creation would assume a form, and present to our eyes scenes exactly analogous to those described by St John.

EUGENE.—After this, the Apostle sees the dead, both small and great, standing before the throne, and judged according to their works. I am now so familiarised with these dead—who are in reality those without spiritual life—that I cannot imagine how our credulous ancestors could ever have taken this literally, and founded on it the senseless dogma of a resurrection in flesh and blood. This dogma, which still exists in the present day in the Church—if the Church can be really said to have any existence—is one of the most disgraceful superstitions which ever took possession of the human mind. How could any one imagine that God is unable to communicate with man except by causing him to resume his earthly body? Why endeavour to impose on the human understanding this miracle—a miracle as incomprehensible as it is useless—this tardy collection of the organic particles of a body which the elements have long since assimilated to themselves? How very childish this idea is, and how simple on the contrary is yours! How is it possible that this should not have sooner been known and acknowledged? In that case, Clarke would not have puzzled himself to prove the possibility of a phenomenon as foreign to our mental nature as it is incompatible with the laws of material creation.

MYSELF.—And when St John says that the sea gave up its dead, our worthy believers never hesitated to conclude that

the ocean would in reality restore the corpses of those who had sunk in its waters, just as if the sharks had not digested them ages before, and as if all the living mass had not been long converted into calcareous stones. But viewing this mystical sea as the great aggregate of human opinion, the matter is most naturally explained.

THE OFFICER.—Why, gentlemen, there is no need of so much reasoning on the matter. Do not the dead here plainly mean spirits who have died previously on earth? You can conceive of these spirits, at the close of the Church, being brought before the judgment-seat or being present to the mind of God, which embraces all things, without arguing from this the necessity of a corporeal resurrection. The sea which gives up its dead is the outward Church; for a prophet sees no other opinions in the mass but those which relate to the Church; and this latter, you are aware, is either the True or the False. Thus your interpretation of the word is really contained in mine. I wish you to pause for a moment on this singular expression—that death and hell also delivered up the dead that were in them! Do you not see that, before sinking into the abyss, the spirits which were then judged bore within them the principles of impiety and hatred? Is not this really death? Does not this really constitute hell? You see plainly that there is no occasion for supposing such a revolution as that hell, considered as a place in which evil spirits are confined, should empty itself to furnish its contingent for the judgment, and afterwards again be filled. In conclusion the visionary says that death and hell were cast into a lake of fire; that is the second death. From this it is evident that the sense which I have given of the passage is the only true one. In fact, how can we conceive in any other way of death giving up its dead, and then of this death being cast into a fire? And, in the second place, how can we speak in any other way of hell being cast into hell? Is it not plain that we must understand by hell those men who carry hell within them, in their hearts? These, indeed, may be said to be cast into the eternal abyss. In saying that this is the second death, the Apostle plainly expresses that it is the spiritual death, or condemnation. I cannot conceive any more natural interpretation of these words, which at first sight seem so embarrassing.

MYSELF.—The whole passage simply means that a judgment is pronounced by Divine truth—in the spiritual world, and not in ours—at the close of the Church, and not at the end of the material world. I should have been compelled to adopt this explanation as the only one not calculated to overturn my reason, even had you not furnished me with additional proofs, which convert it from a philosophical probability into a religious belief.

EUGENE.—There can be nothing more satisfactory to the mind. I have no longer the least doubt that by the New Jerusalem St John means a new doctrine. This mode of interpretation, in fact, classifies the Apocalypse along with the books of the Old Testament prophets, and makes it, like them, an announcement to mankind of a new state of peace and light succeeding to stormy periods of dissension and error. May the age of Superstition never again return, but may the reign of Truth be established on earth ! If this hope constitutes a faith in the New Jerusalem, there is not a sincerely religious man on earth who will not welcome it with open heart. The belief that the New Jerusalem has descended from heaven, is an excellent reason for striving after goodness. The real sages are those who have never despaired of God's providence, but believe that he has come to the assistance of mankind, who, without this help, would have been plunged in endless agitation and in ever-increasing errors. As you say, my dear friend, we are quite disposed to examine, with you, if the New Jerusalem of St John is likely to fulfil our expectations ; we shall learn if we are to look upon it as the mystic city of the happy in heaven ; or if we can reasonably regard it as a doctrine to be established on earth for the purpose of bringing back that Golden Age which the old and querulous see only in the past, but which it is so consoling to look for in the future, and so noble to realise in the present.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rev., chaps. xxi. xxii.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

EUGENE.—The impossibility of applying to earthly events the mystical emblems which St John employs to describe the New Jerusalem, has induced Bossuet, and indeed all other interpreters, to look on this spiritual city as nothing more than an image of the abode of the blessed in heaven. None of them ever imagined that these symbols were applicable to a doctrine, and that consequently the New Jerusalem was simply a new religion appearing at the close of Christianity, just as Christianity itself followed the final destruction of the Israelitish Church. You will find that the expressions employed in the two chapters which we are about to consider, contain the same meaning as in all those which we have already gone over, from which it is natural to conclude that this emblematical city is a moral doctrine.

THE OFFICER.—And as no purely moral idea can exist in the spiritual world without some representation, this doctrine, which to us is a thing without body, or an idea without form, assumed in St John's eyes that outward appearance with which all spiritual perceptions are there clothed. Thus, when St John thought of his doctrine, he saw it; for the extatic cannot do otherwise than behold his thought. He saw it, I repeat; and it was presented to the eyes of his spirit under the appearance of a city. Do not let us forget this, my friends. All that you have seen in the Apocalypse is true—both morally and abstractly speaking; all its images are naturally converted by us into ideas; but do not forget, at the same time, that these ideas were seen by the visionary as images. The successive changes of thoughts and feelings were to him a shifting panorama of events. Thus, he saw God under the forms which he has given to him in the visions we have explained; he saw the other world as a region peopled with beings, and filled with forms and substantial objects. In that world

he beheld Faith Alone under the appearance of monstrous or composite beings ; he saw the Lust of Rule which seizes on holy things as a pretext, under the figure of beings equally monstrous ; and, lastly, the Divine Influence effecting the separation of good from evil, and of truth from falsehood, as a scene peopled with actors. To him, in short, the end of the world was the end of a spiritual society, just as to us it is only the end of a peculiar religious opinion.

MYSELF.—In fact, we must all admit that men who die on this earth go to the spiritual world. There evil and falsehood constitute the state or region of the wicked ; goodness and truth the state or region of the good. We have therefore a heaven and a hell, for the simple reason that we have an immortal soul susceptible of being united to God or of being removed from him. You establish besides the existence of a certain intermediate world, in which those spirits who leave our earth remain for some time, to free themselves from their imperfections before becoming angels, or to throw aside the appearance of virtue before becoming devils. This world seems most probable and reasonable—all antiquity believed in such a one. The souls which inhabit this mixed and intermediate world are the only ones on which judgment is pronounced. I admit this too ; for, after all, these souls must have carried with them their earthly affections and thoughts, and, consequently, their religion, whether good or evil. Lastly, you assert that the mighty revolutions which St John beheld, took place in this intermediate world. In this I agree, for heaven is a state of peace, which cannot be disturbed by our mad and conflicting opinions ; while hell is the negation of the Divine heat and light—a sink of iniquity, which it is not permitted to disturb. All that we have been considering, therefore, must have reference solely to the spiritual world, and I find many facts in antiquity which strengthen your opinion. Many learned inquirers, seeing plainly that extasis had unfolded to the first men the secrets of this world, have had recourse to it to explain the most ancient systems of cosmogony. It was for this reason they believed, and rightly believed, that the wars of the Titans against the gods took place in the same world in which the scenes of the Apocalypse were afterwards represented.

THE OFFICER.—This world, which is in the superior degree while we are in the lowest, is influenced by heaven and hell, which divide between them all its inhabitants, and exercise these mixed influences in turn on our earth, so that whatever appears upon this upper scene, is at the same time the representation of what exists in ours. The present, the future, the past—all appear there ; but these three modes of time are only the expressions of particular phases of the moral life

which to us are brought about by succession of duration. Thus St John saw there two Churches destroyed, and a new one established. This being true to the letter in the innermost essence of things, must necessarily be manifested in the lowest degree; so that we must admit, in like manner, that the two Churches which have been founded upon earth since the Christian dispensation, will be destroyed, and that a new one will be established in their place.

EUGENE.—We are disposed to admit this with all our heart; and whenever we see the dogmas of Rome and Geneva scattered to the winds, and men proclaiming a third religious doctrine, we shall conclude that the Apocalypse is accomplished.

MYSELF.—What an effort of genius that would be! You would recognise the truth when the truth was palpable, and could not be denied. But truth, my dear friends, never presents this characteristic. Notwithstanding its plain and undoubted existence, error always succeeds in establishing its reign side by side with it. I think I understand our friend the Officer's drift; he means to tell us that if our study of the Apocalypse has convinced us that the Reformed and Romish Churches are typified by the dragon and the harlot, we ought also to see that the New Jerusalem symbolises another religion; that if we agree with him that the beast and the false prophet have ended their reign, and have been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, we ought also to conclude that the New Jerusalem has descended upon earth—that, in a word, a new era has commenced for mankind.

EUGENE.—Before we can adopt this conclusion, we must agree upon these two points: 1st, To admit without hesitation that the two doctrines spoken of are meant by the emblems you have alluded to; 2d, To look upon this city, seen by the Apostle, as a religion to be established on earth; while, lastly, you must produce to us an extatic who has seen the fulfilment of the same scenes which St John saw beforehand, in order that we may be sure that the event has been accomplished. Now, of these three conditions, I am disposed only to admit the first, I mean the destruction of the two doctrines or Churches, designated under the Apocalyptic images referred to. I believe firmly that a judgment has been pronounced upon them. For many ages, Gog and Magog have reigned over all Christendom; but Providence will not leave man perpetually in darkness; it will certainly offer him light when he has need of it. Seeing the Ultramontanists and the Protestants, then, in so piteous a state, I conclude that they are morally dead, and they must therefore have died at the same time spiritually, in the spiritual world. That is a matter of course. But the two latter points we have not yet examined. We are now about to see if your New Jerusalem may be really taken as a

doctrine ; if so, I shall willingly adopt it in the room of those which no longer exist ; but even after this, before I can believe that the event has been accomplished, you must produce to me a visionary who has seen all that St John saw. If you can satisfy me on these two last points, I am entirely with you.

MYSELF.—There is not much risk in advancing with so cautious a person as you. On attentively examining the subject, I believe in the judgment seen by St John. The past has indeed been judged, in fact we have cut off all connexion with it. Every one laughs at the absurdities of our old institutions, and all the world is waiting for something better. The enlightened observer of the march of human events cannot help recognising the extraordinary changes which have taken place during the last half century. Mankind no longer stand in the same relation to their fellow-men that they did formerly ; there is an universal spirit of sympathy abroad between good men of every nation ; there is a providential movement in progress, plainly leading us in the path of peace and reform ; therefore we may conclude that God has put his hand to his own work.

THE OFFICER.—And that the New Jerusalem has descended to earth, as I shall endeavour to prove to you. Let us resume the narrative of St John, and follow it word for word. After that, says he—that is, after the evil and the false were banished—I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. To his spiritual vision this was no doubt the case ; but for us, who read by the light of reason only, it is clear that we must substitute for this form of expression the following : I felt a new influence from on high ; I saw a new Church established on earth. For it is from the Church alone—meaning by that the community of pious men—that the earth has any value in the eyes of God. To St John matter is nothing ; the good and the true alone have life, and this good and truth, in the most rigorous language of philosophy, is the Church. The heaven, the earth, and the sea, which disappeared, are in fact those whom we have seen disappear in the preceding chapter. On that point you require no explanation.

MYSELF.—Therefore there is to be no other end of the world than the end of error and vice—no other judgment than that which truth pronounces on the conscience—no new heaven but the new influence of the Divine light, which had formerly been obscured—and, lastly, no new earth but a new religious doctrine communicated to man. If we view the matter in this light, I admit it is perfectly rational ; and the only wonder is, how any people could have been led so far astray as really to believe that the Almighty would create at once a new heaven with all its starry orbs, and a new material earth ; as if this immense firmament, this globe so prodigiously diversified,

were to be made as if by the stroke of an enchanter's wand—as if, in a word, God required to destroy what he had made with so much wisdom and so much magnificence. Your idea exalts my conceptions amazingly; and if you will allow me, in my turn, to quote Scripture to confirm your statements, I shall turn from the close of the Holy Book to its commencement, where in the heavens and the earth created by Jehovah in the book of Genesis, I see a heaven and an earth similar to those of the Apocalypse; from which it results that the material world has neither commencement nor end, as so many philosophers assert.

THE OFFICER.—Or rather, that as the material world is used here simply as the symbol of a moral creation, the extatics who wrote the Bible did not speak of its commencement or its end.

EUGENE.—In truth, I have almost forgotten that I ever was a sceptic, and I cannot withhold my admiration from your lucid commentary. With the explanation you have given of these few words, I can read the whole chapter without difficulty. In fact, here is the second verse: And I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Which I would paraphrase thus: The influence from above being purified, the holy truth descended from heaven on hearts disposed to receive it. It is said in the text that it comes from God, and, in fact, truth can come from no other source. It is called also the bride, and we have learned to regard a doctrine as an affection, and therefore feminine, and the Word, which renders it fruitful, as the bridegroom.

THE OFFICER.—You do not require to be told that Jerusalem signifies a Church. The doctrine of a Church, therefore, may naturally be seen under the appearance of a city. This word, besides, is so employed by the prophets. Isaiah, when speaking of the epoch of peace and good-will heralded by the Saviour, says: Behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth; I shall build a new Jerusalem of joy. You see plainly, therefore, that these revolutions took place formerly just as they are taking place in our own day. Jesus did not build a new Jerusalem of stone, but one of joy; he did not create any other heavens or any other earth, in a literal sense, than those which existed in his own time. Such an agreement between the two books is a sure guarantee of the truth of our interpretation.

MYSELF.—After this, a voice from heaven says plainly to St John: Behold the tabernacle of God with men. It is certain, therefore, that this doctrine, thus emanating from heaven, is to have its seat in the human soul, and that it is not destined only for the blessed in heaven. Men had no longer any abode to receive it but the filthy caves of the Dragon, or the crumbling walls of Babylon. It required, therefore, a new city—a

holy building, for its dwelling-place. You see I am becoming familiarised with the mystic language.

EUGENE.—I believe firmly in the sense which you have just pointed out, and I cannot conceive of any other. God, adds St John—when speaking of those who will inhabit this mystical city—will wipe away their tears. I am fully assured of this. Death will no longer exist for those who unite themselves in sincerity to the Divine Love; for them there will be no longer condemnation or spiritual death. The new creation of him who was seated on the throne is henceforth plain to me. It is indeed a new universe, for the heart of man, both in the world of spirits and in our own, to feel this influence which dissipates falsehood and sin, and allows truth alone to reign in their stead. In the literal sense of the word, this influence, indeed, is not new—it is from eternity; but it is quite correct to say that it is new to him who had previously been deprived of it. Now this has been the state of the world for many ages.

THE OFFICER.—We need only read over the verses which follow, from the sixth to the tenth, without dwelling upon them; their signification is plain.

MYSELF.—In the eleventh verse commences the description of the holy city. Allow me to pause for a moment here. In all ages, the idea of the end of the world and its renovation have been held by men; the Tuscan priests, if we are to believe Plutarch, maintained that whenever one generation was entirely corrupted, another took its place. The Apocalypse asserts no more. The promises of Scripture are rejected by sceptics, under the pretext of the impossibility of their fulfilment in a physical point of view; and the world, therefore, my dear sir, will owe you a debt of everlasting gratitude for having reconciled these predictions with good sense. It appears that the primitive revelation had taught men as you do now; for everywhere it speaks both of the destruction and the renovation of the world. It understood these in a moral point of view, however, while men have rendered them impossible by interpreting them literally.

EUGENE.—Bossuet believed firmly that the universe would be destroyed by fire on the last day, and quotes as proof an epistle of St Peter, who believed in it as well as himself.

MYSELF.—But, gentlemen, your New Jerusalem is not, in fact, new at all. It has been represented from the earliest times on all the monuments of antiquity. I shall endeavour to prove this to you. The Ancient revelation, we have agreed, wrote its symbolic characters on the heavens. Well, it has pictured the New Jerusalem there with all the attributes which St John ascribes to it. The luminous world lighted by the orb of day was the symbol of this mystical city.

It was surrounded, says the Apostle, with the glory of God, and had twelve gates. The twelve gates of the heavens, my friends—those through which the influence of light and heat descend upon the earth—are the twelve signs of the zodiac. These gates are divided three by three, as the twelve signs are divided, three by three, into four seasons. These four seasons form a quadrilateral figure in the heavens, and St John says that the city is square. It is 144 cubits in size; and the astrologers divided each sign in the same way into twelve parts, which give the same number. Each of these signs has its particular genius; and St John perceives twelve angels at the twelve gates of the city. The foundations of the wall are ornamented with all sorts of precious stones; and each of the signs of the zodiac was, in like manner, of a different colour. In the heathen mythology, Juno, the goddess of the air, had also a crown composed of twelve precious stones. It is said that this city will be the tabernacle of God amongst men; and the zodiac also, my friends, is the abode of that Orb which is the image of the Most High. The author of *Pimander*, a work attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, calls the zodiac a tabernacle. A gnostic called Theodosius, a man of genius who belonged to the sect of the Valentinians, held that the twelve apostles were to the Church what the twelve signs of the zodiac are to the natural world. These latter, he says, are ministers of generation, as the former are of regeneration. You see, then, that this idea of finding the moral world in the physical was familiar to the ancients.

THE OFFICER.—There is no doubt but that the first extatics, who beheld the doctrines of truth about to succeed those of falsehood, saw the event described under the same emblems which afterwards appeared to St John. These ideas took their rise in the East—that region in which the traditions of the first revelation were preserved intact. It is no more surprising to find these emblems in the Apocalypse of St John, than it is to see him employ images absolutely similar to those used by Isaiah and Ezekiel; for the pictures presented to the prophets of all ages must necessarily resemble each other. The Jews, following the descriptions of their seers, arranged their tribes after the order of things above. The Orientals, in the same way, employed the objects of the physical creation to represent that spirit-world revealed to them by their extatics. St Clement of Alexandria does not hesitate to say that the high priest among the Jews was an image or emblem of heaven; while the heavens, in their turn, were the image of the spiritual world. Hieroglyphics were invented after the truth had been perceived—that is beyond all doubt.

MYSELF.—What renders these facts more certain is, that all those who have visited the spiritual world have described it with

much the same objects and attributes that St John has given to it. He says that the angel transported him in the spirit to a great and high mountain, to shew him that great city, the Holy Jerusalem. Scipio, in like manner, shews his grandson the dwelling-place of departed souls, transporting him for that purpose into an elevated place. Plato speaks in the same way of the city of the blessed; and Ezekiel was likewise transported to a very high mountain, from whence he saw the mystical city he describes.

EUGENE.—And an angel measured this latter, as we are about to see an angel measure the city of St John.

MYSELF.—Lastly, my friends, this emblem of a holy city, employed to denote a doctrine, is very frequently made use of by the ancients. Plato also built a philosophic city, in which the number twelve is frequently repeated. The wall of his town was also 144 cubits in extent, as you may ascertain by reading the sixth book of his *Republic*. This town, says the author, is sanctified by the correspondence established in it between heaven and earth. Take a note, I beg, of this assertion.

EUGENE.—And it has the more value, that the generally received opinion in the present day is, and justly so, that Plato did nothing more than re-produce, in a new shape, the traditions generally prevalent in the East. His philosophy was not indigenous. Such a theory of spiritualism evidently did not belong to Greece, which was altogether inclined to materialism.

MYSELF.—A cabalistic writer, called Simon Zonathes, has also described a city, the plan of which a reverend father, called Kirker, has handed down to us. It had twelve gates, like that mentioned by St John. Lucian, who laughed at everything, but who, nevertheless, paid a great deal of attention to the traditions current in his time, took it into his head to build a city of the blessed. His city was of gold, the walls of emerald, and in it were celebrated festivals which resemble very closely the wedding supper of the Lamb.

EUGENE.—I think these are sufficient proofs that the city of the Apocalypse is no more the invention of St John than the rest of the sacred drama. It is certain that these ideas were furnished to the men of ancient times by visions or extasis, for all these traditions of mystical cities and astronomical allegories are anterior to any period known in history. Let us now come to the description of St John. I shall be delighted to know the precise meaning of those emblems which the ancients have so carefully preserved, but of which they have given us no explanation. They foolishly looked for a new material world; but I think there is nothing more satisfactory than to view this new creation or world simply as a

moral world. The greater number of the fathers who have commented on the Bible, moreover, have taken the same view of the subject that we do. In saying that the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, they understood it in the sense of a change for the better. I can quite understand this city being lighted by its spiritual sun ; but I cannot see why St John says that this orb was like a jasper stone, transparent as crystal.

THE OFFICER.—I have already told you that jasper, by its transparency, was the emblem of pure light. This emblem is also employed in the walls of the city. The wall represents the Word in the literal sense, which, in fact, defends the spiritual sense, as the wall protects the town which it encloses. The literal sense, too, being the basis and foundation on which the spiritual is built, may in this way, without impropriety, be compared to a wall. O Jerusalem, says Isaiah, I have established sentinels on thy walls ; they will not keep silent, day or night, making mention of Jehovah. In another passage, he says : Thou shalt call thy walls salvation. Jeremiah, when deploring the fall of the Church of his time, says of Jerusalem : Behold if there is one man in her seeking truth ; mount, therefore, on her walls, and overturn them. The Psalmist frequently speaks of a vineyard, the emblem of the Church, surrounded by a wall, which must certainly be looked on as something else than a material enclosure. There are, in like manner, gates to the city ; these signify introduction to the doctrine. Isaiah, when speaking to Zion, uses the following language : Thy gates shall be called salvation. A walled city is entered through its gates ; and the doctrine, therefore, of which the city is the symbol, must be entered in the same way. Here the sense is plain and forcible. Jehovah, says the Psalmist, loves the gates of Zion before all the habitations of Jacob. Enter, says he in another passage, into its gates by confession. Open the gates, says Isaiah, and admit the just nation which observes the works of righteousness. Judah, says Jeremiah, has fallen into affliction, and her gates have become feeble. In the book of Judges we read these remarkable words : He has chosen new gods ; then he commences to overturn the gates. It is quite clear that new gods could be introduced into the old temple by the same material gates which existed previously ; but this is not the case with those which give admission to the truth ; they must be overturned when falsehood is substituted in place of it.

MYSELF.—These quotations are almost superfluous, the meaning of the passage is so clear. It is absolutely impossible to conceive that a material city is spoken of here either in heaven or on the earth. It is a doctrine, and can be nothing else. We have seen before that twelve signifies *all*. The

twelve angels who guard these twelve gates are *all* the truths personified ; nothing can be more reasonable.

THE OFFICER.—In fact, the twelve angels signify all the Divine blessings and truths ; and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed on these gates mean these same blessings and truths received into the Church.

EUGENE.—How natural and harmonious everything here is ! The division of these gates, three by three, so as to form these squares, is explained by what we have formerly seen relative to the disposition of the camp of Israel, with its twelve tribes. In fact, the spiritual world being composed of Love and Wisdom, it necessarily contains two principal regions, each divided into two opposite sections. Thus, the East designates the highest degree of love ; the West, which is opposite to it, signifies the lowest degree ; the South, again, represents the greatest degree of light, and the North the least. These different quarters are frequently quoted by the Eastern writers, evidently with some hidden meaning. I now comprehend their signification, which formerly escaped me entirely.

MYSELF.—The augurs turned towards the east, to study from this position the flight of birds. An extatic tradition had doubtless informed them that it was from this quarter that Divine love issued. If Cicero and Cato had known that, they would have found no difficulty in believing that two augurs might look at each other without laughing. The mystical East, so often alluded to by our poets, has no other origin than the traditions furnished by seers. An author, called Casoli, has written at great length of the custom observed by Christians of turning towards the east, and their belief that God inhabited this region, and the devil the western. One of the reasons he assigns is, that the east is the symbol of light, and the west that of darkness. We, on our part, say that light and darkness are the exact emblems of truth and falsehood. A poem of antiquity says that the sailor looks towards the north, and the astronomer towards the south, which certainly carries with it no moral idea ; but the author adds, that the east belongs to the priest, and the west to the poet :—

“ *Precor Dei oxortum videt oceanumque poeta.* ”

Is not this an epigrammatic way of saying that the poet makes his own god ? In fact, his poem is his statue, and we have seen that Jehovah tells us not to make to ourselves graven images. How many things there are, my friends, in the Apocalypse !

THE OFFICER.—Observe, in the meantime, that the names of the twelve Apostles of the lamb are written in the foundations of the wall. Does not that indicate a city not only in absolute good and truth, but also in the good and truth given

by the Christian revelation? The angel who measured the city with a golden reed is the natural emblem of Him who alone can know and appreciate the doctrine. For this purpose, he carries a golden reed—that is to say, the power which love confers. We read elsewhere, in Ezekiel and Zechariah, of angels measuring cities. It is in accordance with these ideas that the Scripture gives us so minutely the measures and dimensions of the temple and the tabernacle of Jerusalem. To measure is to ascertain the quality of a thing, consequently to comprehend and know it.

EUGENE.—In fact, we say that we have well *weighed* a resolution, and that we have accurately *measured* one's conduct. That which indicates the quality of a material object also indicates perfectly the quality of anything with reference to its goodness and truth. I am prepared, therefore, to find, from the measurement of the angel, that the doctrine is perfect.

THE OFFICER.—In fact, he ascertains that the city is square. Now, it is not possible to express perfection and justice better than by the solidity of a cubic figure, in which the height is the same as the breadth; a mode of expression which we must translate into our vocabulary by saying that it contains as much goodness as truth.

MYSELF.—Length is, in fact, the emblem of good; it is, as it were, a gushing forth of Love, which has no decided direction, until, meeting with truth, it forms breadth also; and then these two, uniting in a third dimension, give solidity. The three geometrical dimensions of bodies are therefore also contained in your theory. Let any one assert now that moral truths are not susceptible of mathematical demonstration.

EUGENE.—Our ordinary language, in fact, never describes moral perfection but under the image of a square—equal in all its parts. We speak of squaring our conduct; and it is when goodness and truth are equally apparent in any one that we say he is just.

THE OFFICER.—The Jews were so well acquainted with the meaning of this emblem, that they built the altar of the sacrifice and that of the incense, in the form of a cube. The breastplate of the grand priest was also a four-sided figure. You see how admirably this harmonises with a doctrine, and how absurd it would be applied to a city. In fact, we cannot form any idea of a cubic city, especially if we reflect that, according to St John, it was 12,000 furlongs in extent, and the length, and the breadth, and the height of it were equal. The word furlong is employed here, as we have seen it in other places, for the word measure itself; it is the measure most generally employed, taken for measure in the abstract. The dimensions of the wall present the same symbols as those of the city. It was 144 cubits in extent—still a square number, expressing

impenetrable solidity. The cubit, like the furlong, is a measure in general use taken for measure in the abstract. I would merely call your attention to the fact, that the furlong, being a measure of distance, is more applicable to the Church, which is represented by the earth ; and the cubit, which is taken from the organs of man, to the manner in which man adopts and becomes a recipient of Divine things.

EUGENE.—St John says that it is the measure of a man ; in fact, there is no possibility of mistaking it, and I fully believe that the first measure known was taken from the arm. Before employing the reed as an aid to this organ, men must have employed the organ itself. What is the meaning, however, of these words : 'The measure of a man—that is, of the angel ?'

THE OFFICER.—As the angel represents the heavens, and man the earth, these words signify that the doctrine referred to unites both together. You see plainly that this is merely the idea of Plato expressed in other words, for he represented his city also as the model of heaven. It is necessary that the doctrine of the Church should make one with heaven, from which proceed all truths possible. It is necessary that the measure of the man should be that of the angel, without which the creature would have two measures and two weights, and thus there would be two truths, which is impossible. Truth is one, no matter what land be its birthplace.

MYSELF.—Why, this absolutely forces conviction. How ridiculous it is to fancy a town measured by an angel and a man conjointly, in the literal sense ! But when we view this as a doctrine in which heaven and earth, re-united, meet together on equal terms, how this satisfies and consoles our reason ! There is no drawback ; all the emblems mentioned in succession can be read alone. The wall of the city is of jasper, to designate the transparency of the literal sense of the Scripture, through which a knowledge of its doctrines enables well-disposed minds to read the spiritual sense, as you enable us to read it now. The city itself is of pure gold—the emblem of Divine love ; and this gold is likened unto clear crystal, in order to embrace in the same image the love which warms and the light which enlightens, re-united in the same recipient, as they are in the material fire. Never was poet more lofty or sublime. As for the twelve precious stones, which serve as the foundation of the wall, I do not see that it is necessary to give the signification of each. By their union and their number they figure all the spiritual truths and all the spiritual goods, like the twelve tribes of Israel of which they are also the attributes. I class them under two principal heads : those which border on red express the different shades of love ; and those in which white predominates signify the different qualities of wisdom. We have seen elsewhere that the high priest

among the Jews also wore these same stones on his breast-plate.

THE OFFICER.—Moreover, the ancient Jerusalem was seen by the prophets who lived under the law as adorned with similar ornaments : Thou city of affliction, says Isaiah, I shall build thy foundations on sapphires, and thy gates of carbuncles ; all thy children shall be instructed by Jehovah. The latter portion of this sentence fully explains the two first, and clearly points out that these sapphires and carbuncles are moral teachings. You now understand why God declares that he will build his Church on a rock, for this rock is evidently the same as those spoken of by Isaiah and St John, and is an emblem of Divine truth.

EUGENE.—I am convinced that if Roman Catholics were acquainted with your profound theory, and the close and accurate deduction you have drawn from it, and were to hear what you have just said respecting this rock, they could not help smiling to think that they ever believed these words referred to the Apostle Peter. How natural your explanations are, in comparison with those current in the world !

THE OFFICER.—I was about to quote, in addition, when you interrupted me, this remarkable verse in the thirteenth chapter of the book of Tobias : The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphires and emeralds, and all the boundaries of her walls of precious stones. You see that this is conclusive. Once for all, St John could not apply to the latter Church any other symbols than those which were already employed to designate the moral attributes of the ancient Churches. You see that these ornaments are not referable to any ideas of Oriental magnificence, in the mind of the author, such as we are in the habit of attributing to the writers of the *Arabian Nights*.

MYSELF.—And even these, I feel certain, only raised their superstructure with materials furnished to them by the primitive revelation. But, by the way, it is stated that each door was a single pearl. What is the meaning of this emblem ?

THE OFFICER.—The pearl, by its brilliancy, is used to designate spiritual knowledge ; in fact, it reflects all the shades of light. Jesus himself compares the kingdom of heaven to a pearl, and the merchant who found it, he adds, went and sold all that he possessed, and bought it. Does this not clearly refer to that man to whom truth is dearer than all other possessions ?

MYSELF.—The cock of the fable, however, loved the smallest grain of corn much better. However, what can we expect from a cock ? That which an animal of his species disdains, is precisely that which is most valued by the wise man. Moral truth is of priceless value to him, while the fool and the vicious man, on the contrary, esteem it as worthless. Thus the Sa-

viour recommends us not to cast our pearls before swine—a most wise counsel, for it is not truth which these animals require; they like much better to wallow in the mire, and to glut themselves with filthy garbage. Each must have food suitable to him.

THE OFFICER.—In this doctrine there is no temple, because the Lamb himself is the temple of it; which means that there shall be no other temple but the Lamb himself; or, in plainer language still, the temple being taken for the worship, there will be no other object of worship in the New Jerusalem but the Lord himself, acknowledged as the only God, and whose Divine humanity will then have no substitute. This is perfectly evident. It is not to be inferred from these words that there will be no outward temple in the New Church; this would be taking the words in their literal acceptance, and would be a direct violation of the rule adopted by ourselves—that all these words be taken in a figurative meaning.

MYSELF.—And the only true meaning. The New Church, in fact, after having overturned the Babylonish and Reformed rule, evidently cannot be founded on anything but the sole and absolute worship of God. I now see clearly that this city, which will have no need of the sun or the moon to give it light, represents a society of men who shall not be enlightened by the false light of the purely natural understanding, but rather by the Divine light itself. The glory of God is a more vivid light than our feeble intellect, and the Lamb is a surer lamp than our inconsistent reason. It means, in short, that there shall be no truths in this Church which are not those of revelation in all its purity. It would be madness to place reason above revelation; it would be enperetitions to demand that this revelation should have any other origin than the Lamb itself. Your New Jerusalem, considered in this light, is the most consoling doctrine in the world; it may become the day-star of the whole human race, without any danger of inspiring its votaries with madness or ill-regulated enthusiasm. I believe fully, with St John, that when it shall be made known the nations will walk in its light. It will be indeed a delightful thing to live in accordance with truths so plain and simple. The kings of the earth, says St John, will bring their glory and their honour into it. In fact, can the friends of truth have any other glory than that of rendering unto God what belongs to Him?

THE OFFICER.—The Psalmist says the same of the preceding Church. All the kings, says he, will prostrate themselves before it, and all the nations will serve it. Isaiah says to Jerusalem: Thou wilt suck the milk of nations and the paps of kings. I pass on, in the meantime, to the delightful emblem of the gates of the New Jerusalem, which shall not be closed

in the day-time. Is there, in fact, any day, any time, when those who are in the truth may not approach God? No. Without doubt the gates are always open to them; it is only falsehood which shuts them against itself. Through these gates men will bring to God the honours and the glories of nations; that is to say, that they will recognise that all good and all truth proceed from God alone.

MYSELF.—This would be a real emancipation of the human race. Then, in fact, we might say as truly in the moral sense as we do in the physical, that the sun shines for all the world. But was this the case before the judgment? Not so. How many teachings of men were interposed between poor mortals and the Sun of intellect!

THE OFFICER.—Doubtless the truth will visit every one but those who have not put themselves in a fit state to receive it. Thus St John ends this chapter by saying that nothing filthy or impure shall enter into the holy city.

EUGENE.—This is too evident to be disputed. Innocence of heart and mind is the only condition requisite for those who would arrive at the truth. There cannot, therefore, be any in the New Jerusalem but those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. This is not an intolerant exclusion, but a necessity arising out of the very nature of things.

THE OFFICER.—As you display so quick a comprehension of my meaning, I shall run hastily over the last chapter, which contains scarcely anything that you are not already familiar with. The first object perceived by St John is the stream of living water flowing from the throne of the Lamb. This living water is the emblem of pure truth, which in fact proceeds from the throne of the Redeemer. This is particularly clear from the words of our Saviour: Whosoever believeth in me, there shall be in him a well of living water. He who used these words when establishing Christianity, may well be supposed to repeat them when re-establishing it. He is the same in all ages. On the two banks of the river was the tree of life, yielding twelve descriptions of fruit, one every month, and the leaves of which served for the healing of the nations.

MYSELF.—Is not this a striking illustration of the manner in which the primitive revelation described moral things after the analogy of the material creation? Can anything be more forcible than this emblem? Do not the twelve months of the year scatter their fruits on the river of time?

THE OFFICER.—But the truth itself is even more magnificent than the symbol. Is not this tree of life Divine Love, whose fruits in fact are good works? Can the works of man be said to proceed from anything else than Divine love—the universal good in its essence? How can any one take this tree of the Apocalypse for any other than that which was

given to our first parents in the garden of Eden, before they had substituted the love of self for that Divine love which is the only source of all disinterested affection? How can we avoid seeing in this tree the emblem of Him who said: I am the vine; ye are the branches? Thus, was it not natural that the tree which appeared before the Fall, and reappeared before the Redemption, should be again presented to our sight at the Third Regeneration of the human race. After this, is it conceivable that any should refuse to believe that the New Jerusalem is a new religion?

EUGENE.—It is as clear as the light of day. At the commencement of this interview, I laid down three conditions as necessary to be fulfilled before adopting your interpretation. First, that we should admit that the two Communities we have seen judged are two Religions. This point I have adopted without hesitation. Second, that we should recognise in the mystical city a Religion, not strictly speaking New, indeed, but new at least to our eyes. This second point is now as evident to me as the first; the only thing which remains is the confirmation of all this by an extatic.

MYSELF.—I agree with you respecting the two first articles; one must be more than narrow-minded to deny them. But we interrupted you at, to me at least, a most interesting passage. This tree of life yields twelve descriptions of fruit; that is plain enough. The number twelve signifies the whole; and, in fact, all the fruits of religion are produced by the Divine love, which takes up its abode in the heart when self-love is banished thence. The denial of self is the necessary condition of all good without alloy, as of all truth without an admixture of falsehood. But what connexion is there between these twelve descriptions of fruit and the twelve months?

THE OFFICER.—The months, being portions of time marked out by the revolutions of the moon, signify the states of men with respect to faith. God, or Divine love, produces goodness in man when the latter is in the truth; that is quite clear. The Divine Will cannot be substituted for our own, except when our understanding is enlightened; and this depends on ourselves. By cherishing a love of truth, we put ourselves in a position to reap its fruits—that is to say, to receive good, and good is then received into our heart.

EUGENE.—It is, indeed, an indispensable condition. This truth, my dear friend, is a profound one. I have never known any man really upright and religious who was not at the same time candid and sincere. A love of truth disposes man for the reception of Divine goodness: but if, in place of truth, he be swayed by error, the good which he possesses is adulterated and destroyed. It is like a precious cordial poured into an impure vessel.

MYSELF.—Thus the fetes of the new moons bore a moral signification. It was for this reason that so many of the nations of antiquity, including the Jews, offered up sacrifices at the commencement of each month or new moon. Their meaning, doubtless, was: We hereby place ourselves in a state to receive the truth; may heaven henceforward accept our sacrifices. And these sacrifices, we are taught by your admirable theory, were not really sacrifices of animals, but of the passions represented by them. How much light is there in a single word of the Apocalypse!

THE OFFICER.—Moreover, Ezekiel speaks also of fruit-bearing trees growing on the banks of rivers, which yield, says he, new fruits every month. This can apply to man alone; in no country of the world is the vegetation so vigorous. The months have the same meaning in the following passage of Deuteronomy: Blessed be the land of Joseph by Jehovah, for the precious things put forth by the moon—or the months. As for the leaves which were for the healing of the nations, the emblem speaks for itself; they are those rational Truths which are ever in harmony with true religion. In fact, it is these truths alone which can heal those men whose understandings are not sufficiently docile to yield at once to revelation.

MYSELF.—It is they, in fact, which have healed us. It is your strictly rational theory, your system in which everything is proved, and nothing arbitrarily put forward—which has led us to believe in your explanation of the Apocalypse. For my own part, I should be unwilling to believe in any other manner. In fact, to attempt to comprehend this book without summoning all the aid which reason and science can give, is to expose one's-self to the danger of being led away by mere fancies. That we may proceed in this rational path, therefore, and leave nothing arbitrary or unexplained, can you tell us what connexion there is between the leaf of the tree and rational truth in man?

THE OFFICER.—The tree, as we have already established, is the perfect hieroglyph of man; its ramifications correspond to our fibres and nerves; its flowers are our hopes. The man who hopes, or, in other words, the childlike man—for it is in childhood that hope is especially in the ascendant—is not he the tree in flower? The fruits, we have seen, are our actions. It is by means of the leaves that the tree grows and flourishes: they drink in light and air, which are the symbols of the mind. It is from the mind, in like manner, that man obtains food for his reasoning faculties. Is not the tree stripped of its leaves adopted by poets as a striking image of a man deprived of his intellect? Were not the crowns formerly adjudged to victors made of different descriptions of leaves, in order to denote the different objects contended for? Do you

remember the golden branch with which Æneas descended into the infernal regions? Ezekiel speaks also of trees whose leaves served as remedies. In Genesis, Leviticus, the Prophets, the Evangelists, leaves are often made mention of; and in every case they must be understood as meaning scientific or rational truths. Adam, we are told, covered himself with the leaves of the fig-tree to conceal his nakedness; or, in other words, summoned to his assistance the thoughts of natural good, fancying he could thus supply the want of that spiritual good which he had lost. Jeremiah, when describing the desolation of the Jewish Church, says: That in her blindness the leaves themselves will fall from the trees. What can be more truthful? Reason loses its godlike nature, and degenerates into folly, when it is deprived of all spiritual nutriment.

EUGENE.—Rather a lengthy commentary upon two lines; fortunately, the following verses require none: And there shall be no more curse, says St John. Where the Lord is, and where man is united to Him, there can be no curse. It is evil and falsehood which separate man from God, and in them alone is there a curse. I shall make my dwelling, says Jesus, with those who keep my commandments. And, continues the text, they shall see his face. But how? Will the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem be all extatics?

THE OFFICER.—To see the face of God is to see the truth which is in his Word; the Word, we have frequently said, is Himself; well, to see the spiritual sense of this Word is really to see the face of God. The faces of God, it is very clear, are his attributes. Jehovah, says the Psalmist, I seek thy face; make thy face to shine on thy servant. O God, says he again, make thy face to shine, that we may be saved. Is there anything which can save but the truth? Thou concealest thyself, he adds, in the secret of thy face. Certainly, truth has its secrets, but the face has none, except with hypocrites. By reason of their malice, says Jehovah, in Jeremiah, I have concealed my face from them. Does not the truth, in fact, fly from evil and falsehood? Your sins, says Isaiah, have hid from me the face of God. Can anything be plainer? Micah says: Jehovah will conceal his face from them, as they have rendered their works wicked. Does not truth, in fact, abandon those who lead a wicked life?

EUGENE.—Yet God said to Moses that no one can see His face and live. Here the word must be taken in its literal signification.

THE OFFICER.—Without doubt. And since no one can behold God in his primitive essence, is it not clear that to see his face, means here to see the truth emanating from him?

MYSELF.—A truce, if you please, to this Biblical learning, and allow me to bring forward the proofs furnished by the primi-

tive revelation. In the cosmogony of the Persians, there was also a river of living water flowing from the throne of Oromazes, the result of his love for man. Lucian, whose birth-place was Samosates, in Syria, a district bordering upon those countries in which the most ancient Oriental traditions took their rise, also mentions a river of water as surrounding the holy city, of which he gives us the description. He also speaks of vines which produced grapes twelve times in the year. Is not this resemblance wonderful, especially the choice of the vine? In the celestial chart, we see a river issuing from the East, beneath the Lamb, and flowing towards the South; it is the river Eridan. The river of which Ezekiel speaks, flowed in the same direction. The ancients even called the equinoctial Ram, *Dux immortalis aquæ*. How many striking analogies are here! and how plain it is that the celestial chart, like the book of Isaiah, is the work of an extatic! It is most remarkable that Virgil also speaks of a river in his Elysium, and gives it the same name as the river of the constellations; he calls it, in fact, the Eridan.

THE OFFICER.—How magnificent a sight it is to behold the River of Time flowing from the equinoctial Ram, as the river of Moral Life flows from the throne of the Redeeming Lamb! No, my friends, henceforth I feel assured your faith in the Apocalypse is proof against all the efforts of ignorant mockery and frivolous scepticism. Hygin says that Jupiter placed the ram in the heavens to signify that the sun was to renew the whole face of nature. This is evidently borrowed from the announcement of the Ancient revelation that the symbolic Lamb was one day to create anew the heart of man.

EUGENE.—How much these ideas tend to widen the domain of science! There is no doubt that the physical world was used as the symbol of the intellectual world. We are studying, my friends, a prophecy which extends to the end of time, and aiding ourselves in its study by the light of traditions handed down from the origin of mankind. Where is the science, in the present day, which embraces a horizon so vast? Bossuet was most unfortunate in looking on this city as the abode of the elect in heaven. Alas! in so doing, he condemned the earth never to become the throne of God. How much more consoling, and how much more truthful, is your theory!

THE OFFICER.—Let us hasten to a close, for I perceive our interview is lengthening out. And there shall be no more night there, St John proceeds; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. I should not draw your attention to these expressions, which are exactly similar to those which we explained above, but that I wish you to observe, that even those who look upon

this book as a system of mythology or astrology, cannot help seeing in this a different light from that of the stars. It most clearly points to that intellectual light, that inward day, produced by the spiritual sun which enlightens the mind.

MYSELF.—It is most remarkable that those initiated in the mystery of Mythra gave to light the name of *the bridegroom*. In it do we not behold, in fact, that inward truth, the light of the mind—that Word, in short, of which the Church is the Bride? It is He who is the source of all true light. Martianus Capella, in his hymn to the sun, calls it *Mentis fons, lucis origo*. The first words prove most unmistakably that it signifies the light of the mind, of which the moral sun is the origin.

THE OFFICER.—I pass on to the seventh verse, where the Lord himself says: Behold, I come quickly. You will ever bear in mind that it is in his Word that he is to come; that is, by explaining it, and rendering it accessible to the understanding.

EUGENE.—As you have done for us; and this explanation, in my opinion, is not one of the least proofs of the descent of the New Jerusalem upon earth. It is said in the gospel that the Lord will appear in the clouds of heaven. These clouds are evidently those which surround the Scriptures, and which to me are now totally dissipated; but St John adds these words, which somewhat puzzle me: Blessed is he who keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Now, in the whole of this book we have seen only symbols, the food of the understanding. There are no precepts there to be practised. How can one practise locusts, for example, or the horses which were loosed after the Euphrates was unbound? How put in execution the vision respecting the dragon and the two beasts? I believe firmly in the two witnesses which were brought to life again; but I cannot see how this has any reference to my conduct. In short, my friends, we have seen a panorama unfolded before our eyes; but this, evidently, is not anything that can be applied to moral life.

THE OFFICER.—I differ from you on this point most completely. You have found in this book the whole truth, and the truth is that which renders manifest the good. The book which was before closed is opened for you. This good, or these blessings, are the precepts which you have discovered under the symbolical images. These you are to practise—of that there is no doubt. Prophecy, we have said, is synonymous with doctrine. The doctrine of the Bible is altogether concealed under the prophetic sense. This sense being unfolded, and the doctrine being made known, the obligations which it contains are binding on you. Now what is this doctrine, if it is not that of the Good and True, involving such immense results, and containing such innumerable applications?

EUGENE.—In fact, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures being drawn from the spiritual world, cannot be described by any but extatics, or those in communication with the spiritual world, so that a prophet is evidently he who alone can teach the doctrine. To practise the words of the prophecy is most certainly to practise the doctrine which this prophecy contains. To proceed : St John endeavours again to prostrate himself at the feet of the angel ; but the latter prevents him, as we have seen before, in chap. xix. Afterwards the angel addresses him in these singular words : He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. This appears to me most extraordinary counsel to proceed from the lips of an angel. I like the words with which he concludes the sentence much better : And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.

THE OFFICER.—St John hears these words in the spiritual world, in which, as we have seen, spirits prepare themselves for heaven or hell. Every man takes with him from this world some mixture either of good or evil. The just requires to be still more purified, before becoming an angel of heaven ; while vice must throw off all virtue before becoming a devil. He must lose the little outward good which he already possesses. In a word, although already filthy, he must become more filthy still.

EUGENE.—I defy the most ingenious reasoner to give a more satisfactory explanation of these words. Bossuet says that this signifies that God suffers injustice to continue for a certain time : but this is not any reply ; for if the unjust becomes still more unjust, it is to the detriment of those who are in company with them.

THE OFFICER.—Daniel says in the same sense : The impious will act with impiety, and no impious will understand ; nevertheless, the intelligent will understand. The following words will now seem plain to you : Outside are dogs and poisoners, and sorcerers and fornicators. Nothing impure, in fact, can enter where truth and justice have their abode.

MYSELF.—This is almost the same phrase as that used by Horace : *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*. But it is not in the works of poets alone that we find this sentiment ; it is another relic of the Ancient revelation. The initiated, to whom the truths which you have just been made acquainted with, were disclosed, also banished the profane from their assemblies. This exclusion, besides, is a form employed by all religious associations. The primitive Church, amid the silence of mystery, announced by the voice of the deacon : Let the penitents retire. It is perhaps this which is alluded to by the words pronounced in modern days by the priests at the altar : *Ite missa est*. You see, also, that after the priest has pronounced these words,

there still remains the last benediction to give, and the last gospel to read ; this gospel is that of St John, which reveals the whole mystery.

EUGENE.—It is certainly worthy of our attention, and even our admiration, to find that Horace, the mysteries of Eleusis, and the formulas of the mass, all agree on this point. I am a little annoyed, however, at the use of this word "dog." That the Turks should address this epithet to Christians, is perhaps excusable ; but for charitable Christians to apply it to their brethren !

THE OFFICER.—My brethren, said the Saviour, are those who do the will of my Father. All men are brethren, Turks as well as Christians ; and there are none excluded from the great fraternity of men who are in the practice of good and the knowledge of truth, but those who are in evil and in falsehood. Now such a state is perfectly expressed by the word "dog," for this animal is the emblem of purely corporeal pleasures, and fitly so, from its coarse and ravenous appetites. Isaiah says that the sentinels of Israel are like dogs of insatiable voracity. The Psalmist describes men of sensual appetites as dogs, seeking everywhere for food, without finding wherewith to satisfy their hunger. Moses says, in consequence, that the dog is an abomination to Jehovah. You can have no difficulty in understanding this, since the word alone offends your delicate ears. There is now only one passage of the text which requires explanation—that in which St John declares, that if any one alters or takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

MYSELF.—I should say it was a very severe sentence, if I did not find the same threats pronounced in all ancient initiations, where the object was to preserve the purity of the doctrine taught from all profanation and from all alteration. It was an excellent precaution ; for when the ignorant have once thrown contempt on that truth to which they cannot attain, they are lost without resource ; they can never again be induced to adopt it, because they believe that they have finally judged it, with a full knowledge of its nature. It was this, perhaps, which caused Fontenelle to say : If I had my hand full of truth, I would not open it.

THE OFFICER.—That phrase was simply the expression of a selfish man, jealously careful of his repose and tranquillity. St John was wiser than Fontenelle. Is it not clear, that if any one, after understanding the doctrine set forth in this book, adulterates it, by substituting anything of his own in its stead, or takes away anything from it, by refusing to subscribe to it, the plagues written in this book—that is to say, false-

hood and evil—are his lot? Is it not clear that his name shall be taken away from the book of life, since this book is the gift of Divine love, to which man can arrive only by a complete detachment from self? To add is to attribute to man the work of God; that is quite evident: to take away from the doctrine, is to refuse to acknowledge and obey it; this, too, is clear. We are not, therefore, to understand that it is the adding or taking away the words that is here meant; God for this would not blot out our names from the book of life. The book ends by these words: Come, Lord Jesus. You say so also, doubtless, my friends; and if God takes up his abode in you, the New Jerusalem descends for you from heaven, the Apocalypse is accomplished in all its entirety, and I have nothing left to explain to you.

EUGENE.—Before we examine the testimony of the extatic who is to furnish us with the last proof that we demanded, I may say, for my own part, that I agree perfectly, and without hesitation, to all that you have just told us. There is not a word in your clear and rigid criticism which I can dispute. There is not a truth in your profound and unanswerable moral theory which can be denied. If any others after you shall attempt to explain the Apocalypse, I have not the most remote idea how they are to set about it.

THE OFFICER.—I shall now give you the additional proof you required. In fact, my friends, I am only the vehicle for conveying the truths which you have heard; another brought them to light before me, and this other—I can now mention the fact without exciting your laughter—was an extatic.

MYSELF.—Far from ridiculing this qualification, we look on it as the surest guarantee for the truth of the explanations you have given us. The title of extatic is to us, as to the ancients, a sacred title, and very far, indeed, from being a mark of reprobation. Sanchoniaton, in concluding his narrative of the wonderful adventures of the gods of Phœnicia, gives the name of *prophets* to the chiefs of the initiation, who, in the celebration of their mysteries, presented the initiated with the symbolical pictures. They were real prophets, I doubt not, and not astrologers, as Dupuis understands by the word.

THE OFFICER.—If you had gathered but this one idea from all our conversations, it would have amply repaid you, for it is of endless variety and truth in its application. Yes, my friends, the Ancient revelation, the Old Testament, the four Gospels, the Apocalypse—all are the works of extatics. The doctrine contained in these books, therefore, cannot be understood except by those who have enjoyed a similar mode of perception. The result is, that if a doctrine is necessary to enable us to understand all those productions, we are not to look for it either in the Reason of Protestant Sects, or in the

so-called Infallible Interpretation of Roman Catholic divines : it can only be found in the extatic revelations of a man of clear head and upright heart, who has thus become acquainted in the spiritual world with the originals of the emblems used in all the revelations. A Biblical doctrine furnished by reason is necessarily variable and uncertain ; but if its elements are furnished to us by extasis, it may be rigorously exact. If you have a book written in Chinese characters, is it not clear that one acquainted with the Chinese language will be likely to explain it better than any other ? Spirits, my friends, have a language of their own, and the visionary or extatic who is acquainted with this language, is the only one who can translate to us faithfully those books which the prophets—who were spirits, as regarded their inward senses—have bequeathed to us from the earliest times. As I see no disposition in you to deny this palpable truth in any way, I shall mention to you the name of the extatic who has given you, through my lips, all the admirable explanations which have so much astonished you. He is an author of the last century, called Swedenborg.

EUGENE.—I have often heard him spoken of, and frequently even with irreverence, as a visionary who enjoyed some celebrity, in connexion with the phenomena of animal magnetism, about a hundred years ago. I am quite ready to receive his testimony as that of an extatic in perfect communication with the spiritual world, since you tell me so. What proof, however, can you give me that this man was not the dupe of his own imagination ?

THE OFFICER.—The same proofs which lead you to admit the truth of the explanations which I have just given you. My theory of the good and the true, divided into three degrees, I have received from him, and it is set forth in his works with a clearness and precision which cannot be too highly praised in the present day, when metaphysical subjects are enveloped in so many clouds. That critical explanation of the Scriptures which I have presented to you, that system of interpretation, so vast, and yet so certain, I have found in his writings. When visions are thus confirmed by proofs so rational and so solid, it demonstrates most clearly, as it seems to me, that those communications have not been taken from the False and the Evil region of the world of spirits. We have admitted that visions, in themselves, testify to the immaterial or supernatural origin of the doctrine ; but we have also admitted that the doctrine, when examined rationally, proves the purity of the origin whence the visions are drawn. If that be the only certain criterion, as I believe it is, you will be obliged, I think, to acknowledge, with me, the truth of Swedenborg's spiritual communication. No one can present more

sure or undoubted credentials. Now, this author tells us that he saw all that St John has described—that he was an eye-witness of symbolical representations, such as the extatics of all times have beheld. The last proof you required of me is thus as firmly and well established, I trust, as all the others. In fact, if the only grounds of convicting a prophet of hallucination and falsehood be the doctrine which he propounds, I lay before you that which Swedenborg inculcates, in the fullest assurance that you will find nothing in it which can in any way be impugned.

MYSELF.—Your conditions, my dear Eugene, which appeared so searching, can no longer be any obstacle to your believing. You are caught in your own net. As I took care, however, not to commit myself in this way, I may ask our friend if Swedenborg saw the scenes of the Apocalypse repeated in the same order that St John saw them, or if he only perceived them at scattered intervals, and afterwards grouped the emblems in one picture by an exercise of the intellect, and not as a result of the extatic faculty?

THE OFFICER.—In my opinion, absolute truth is only to be found in the translation of the Apocalyptic symbols, considered separately. The order in which St John saw them, inasmuch as it partakes of the nature of prophecy, is not capable of being demonstrated with equal certainty. Before we can give the key to this enigma, we must, in fact, see as St John did, and this is what took place with Swedenborg. I believe firmly in what he states, from the confidence I place in his sincerity, not from any impartial examination which I have made myself. I can judge, by my reason, of the separate meaning of each of the words of his sacred vocabulary; I can compare these words with other passages of Holy Scripture which contain similar expressions; but I cannot, in the same way, compare the sensations he received in the spiritual world with my own sensations, because the latter are limited to the natural world.

EUGENE.—The intellect of man, when placed in contact with the universal light which enlightens all men, judges by means of this light of the truth of those things which are presented to his examination. This light enables him to distinguish that which is probable from that which is not. Aided by this inward light, I see clearly the signification of the emblematic words of the sacred language; but this light leaves me the moment I attempt to read the discourses pronounced in this language in the spiritual world. I say to myself: It is very possible, it is even probable, that this is so, but I cannot affirm it positively, since the light which would enable me to see it clearly is wanting.

THE OFFICER.—Just so. I do not think, therefore, that it is

of importance for me to believe, servilely, that Swedenborg, when in the spirit, saw precisely the same scenes, and heard the same words, which St John saw and heard, when also in spirit, 1700 years before him. The Apocalypse of St John is a picture of the degradation and fall of the Ancient Church, and the establishment of the New. I see the Christian Church crumbling around me; and this, of itself, is sufficient to induce me to believe Swedenborg's statements relative to the New Church which he offers to my notice. That is all of which I really am a judge. I am not at all qualified to judge of the spiritual circumstances which accompanied these moral events. To an extatic, every mental idea has a form. St John, therefore, must have *seen* the ideas which the Holy Spirit suggested to him, under forms appreciable to a man-spirit. And Swedenborg, when entering like him into the spirit, saw these same ideas clothed with the same forms. But the phenomenon is not repeated for us, and we can therefore judge only of its outward manifestation in the world around us. Judging in this way, I believe that the Church has fallen, and is in the course of being re-established. This New Church is the New Jerusalem, I have no doubt; it is the same city of refuge which we have seen presented at the close of each religious epoch, and at the second birth of each Church. It is the Age of Gold which is mentioned in the first chapters of Genesis, although this was not the first revelation made known to men. It is the same Age of Gold which Christ came to offer to the earth at the close of the Israelitish Church; and it is clear, evident, demonstrable to me, that this Age was again to appear when faith and love should cease to exist in the old communions. I believe in the remedy, because I see clearly the disease; but to fix a precise date to this event is out of my power. There is no time for the soul. The spiritual yearnings and aspirations of a single life may realise the whole Bible. I believe fully that this renovation has happened now as it did several times before; that is all I can say. I cannot, notwithstanding all my confidence in Swedenborg, affix the precise date to this event that he perceived in his vision. This, in fact, would be to believe from the sensations of another. Now, faith is not a mere matter of opinion, but results from the exercise of the understanding, acting in concert with the affections. Swedenborg affirms that he saw these events take place in the spiritual world, in the year 1757. It may be so; but I would translate this statement into the following language: In the year 1757, Swedenborg saw, when in a world without any fixed time, symbolical images appear, expressive of certain relations between man and God. I, therefore, as a man inhabiting this lower earth, must wait for the outward manifestation of these events before saying with cer-

tainty that they have happened. I have no doubt, however, that they were seen by Swedenborg ; but the same Spirit which enabled St John to see seventeen centuries as a single moment, could no doubt compress or alter the duration of the drama which Swedenborg had presented to him. Epic poets frequently act in this way, when they represent a long series of reigns and events before they take place. These reigns are present to the hero of the poem, who is transported to the immaterial world ; but it is only in proportion as they are manifested outwardly, that men can assign to them a date upon the earth.

EUGENE.—Besides, limited as our view necessarily is, these events may very possibly arrive at their completion without our remarking them. Thus, we ought not to fall into the opposite error, and affirm that the scenes of the Apocalypse have not yet been fulfilled. Bossuet has already remarked, with much justice, that we ought not to lay it down as a settled principle, that prophecy should necessarily be perceived or understood when the events contained in them were fulfilled. The design of God, according to this learned theologian, is not that prophecies should be clearly understood at the time when they are accomplished. God enables us to understand the wonders of his providence when he thinks it desirable, or when we are in a fit state to do so ; but never in any way so as to interfere with our liberty. Now, it was only after the event took place that the first Christians understood that Christianity had been established ; the spiritual event had indeed taken place, but their faith was not settled with regard to it until after its manifestation was plain and decided.

MYSELF.—A very reasonable view of the subject ; and our position resembles very much that of the early Christians. Swedenborg saw the event, no doubt, taking place in the spiritual world ; but before we can attach any confidence to his prediction—or rather, before we can feel any deep conviction of its truth—we must behold the completion of it in this world. We are told in Exodus that man can only see God from behind, and it is reason alone which can perceive him even in this way. Let us examine attentively, therefore, the events which are taking place, and, when we have done so, we shall know what date to assign to the fulfilment of Swedenborg's visions—for, after all, everything resolves itself into that. The previous steps we are all agreed upon. The real sense of the Apocalypse can only be revealed by that doctrine which explains the spiritual sense of the entire Scriptures. The Scriptures do not treat of the history of earthly kingdoms, but of Divine things, and these Divine things, from one end of the Bible to another, are expressed

by emblems. Swedenborg's explanations are founded on a knowledge of these mysterious symbols. An extatic, like St John, he could not have given a key of his revelation without himself receiving a revelation from above. His mission was to make clear the obscure words of a prophetic book, which the Lord himself desired should not be sealed up. To perform this task, it required a man whose spiritual sight was opened. In a word, if the Apocalypse is a vision—and the slightest study proves it to be so—it was absolutely necessary that its sense should be furnished to us by a visionary. This designation, which, in other circumstances, would tend to excite a prejudice against Swedenborg, is here the surest guarantee of the truth of his commentary.

THE OFFICER.—Thus, my friends, we are all agreed on this subject. We adopt the same moral theory and the same religious views; we interpret Scripture in the same manner; we receive the same prophetic testimony; and nothing henceforth can excite any discussion or difference of opinion between us. In fact, if one of us, from examination, should be led to conclude that the New Jerusalem has been in existence since 1757, that would be no reason why those who believe it has been established subsequently to that period, should deem the others in error. We all believe firmly that it shall be fulfilled in time; and a few years makes little or no difference with respect to it. If we do not agree respecting the precise date, it is only because some of us see political and moral revolutions taking place in society which the others do not perceive. It would argue the extreme of superstition to make this matter of date the ground of conscientious objection.

CHAPTER XIV.

GENERAL VIEW.

MYSELF.—We are to devote our present meeting to a brief and comprehensive retrospect of all that we have hitherto been considering. We have examined so many hieroglyphics in detail, that I have only retained a general impression of a most ingenious and even exact vocabulary, by means of which we have translated the Apocalypse of St John, the style of which, every one will agree, is not at first sight very plain or rational, into the language of good sense and reason. We now require the general sense of the hieroglyphics, the connexion between the different chapters, and their order in succession, so as to enable us to form a connected idea of the whole. Come, my friend, begin ; we are all attention.

EUGENE.—Before we do so, if you have no objection, I shall endeavour to state briefly the results of our first sitting, at the close of which we met with our valuable instructor for the first time. When conversing about the enigmas of the Bible, and the system of religion which it contains, there passed before us, as if in a deputation, representatives of the two great communions into which Christendom is divided at the present day. These representatives stated each their respective systems, and from them we saw that the one party rely for their interpretation of Scripture—that is to say, of the Divine Word—on the Authority of a Man who pretends to reign as the vicar of Jesus Christ, and to hold the place of God upon the earth. Our friend, the Abbé, told us so in plain terms. The representative of the other side—the Protestant editor—after all his well-turned periods, really told us no more than that it was absolutely necessary to leave the interpretation of the Bible to individual judgment ; and, for fear of being submerged in this sea of conflicting opinions, to adopt the dogma of Faith Alone. The result, therefore, of these two statements is plainly that Christianity has declined from

its primitive purity and simplicity in two ways : First, Man has been substituted for God ; secondly, Faith Alone has been held up as the foundation of all religion, and the precepts of spiritual life looked on as of no effect. From this state of things two results have followed. The first of the two communions we have referred to substitutes Human Authority, without any examination, for a doctrine which should not only be accepted by the heart, but should at the same time be acknowledged by the intellect. The second, leaving each to form his own doctrine at random, annihilates, by so doing, that sole and undivided Truth which is the only foundation of religion, and in appealing to faith alone, neutralises as it were all the faculties of the mind, which are nevertheless so necessary to enable us to rise to the Almighty. After listening to these two statements, we were both fully convinced that Christianity in the present day had declined in its power and truth, and, like those religions which preceded it, had ended—if not as regards the conduct, at least as regards the professed opinions of Christians—by Man-Worship on the one hand, and by the Prostration of the Understanding on the other. In this state of things, what did our friend the Officer do ? He confirmed us in our idea of this decline and fall of Christianity—which, indeed, it was not difficult to perceive—and proved to us that the Bible, without a doctrine to assist us, was incomprehensible as a whole ; and that there could be no true doctrine but one which referred all the expressions and figures of Scripture to one unvarying and settled interpretation. He convinced us, that, as God is present in his Word, it is to the Scriptures alone that we should pay our adoration and obedience ; and, lastly, he demonstrated to us, in the clearest manner, that Barren Faith, by which we profess a belief in that which arouses no sympathy within us, and calls for no exercise of our understanding, is a sort of incantation or charm, and that real religion ought to consist in Charity, Faith, and Good Works ; because God, from whom alone it proceeds, is Love, Wisdom, and Power. These are always united, and only in the act of Redemption do they seem for a moment to be divided.

MYSELF.—Your review, my dear Eugene, is as correct as it is laconic ; but it is capable of being extended beyond the limits of the two communions you have referred to. Our friend informed us that religion has become vitiated, in the present day, in the two ways in which it ever has been in times past. St John, he told us, undoubtedly wrote in the Apocalypse the history of religion—that is to say, the history of God and Man—the Source of love and the Receptacles of it ; and, consequently, seeing these two methods or modes of corruption expressed in the pictures of the Apocalypse, he told us

that the Protestants and Roman Catholics were represented by the Red Dragon and the Harlot. In that he told us nothing but what was most probable ; and no one certainly could express himself more rationally.

EUGENE.—And yet, if you remember, you evinced a strong repugnance to these very statements which you have just repeated with all the appearance of conviction. Such is ignorance ; it decides on every subject without knowing any, and when afterwards enlightened by science, it is utterly ashamed of its former ignorant decisions and its disdainful smile. You see plainly that when the Apocalypse described religion as corrupted and degraded, it classified this degradation under two great heads, which may be found in all religions, viz., the Dragonicians—if I may use the term—and the Babylonians. Lest you might doubt that these two classes really existed, Providence sent you, before the discussion commenced, first an Ultramontanist, to whom you could not yourself help applying the term Babylonian, since his own confession, the very panegyric he pronounced on his doctrine, proved its justice beyond a doubt ; and, secondly, a Dragonician, who reduced everything to Faith Alone, like the horsemen of the Apocalypse. Such, if you remember, was the result of our first interview.

Still feeling rather uncertain that the Apocalypse was merely the demonstration of these truths—and it must be confessed that our friend the Officer stated his views rather abruptly—you laid before him your astrological scheme, and I my system of historical interpretation ; but, let us confess it frankly, both our edifices were crumbled to the dust. In this second interview we were at least satisfied of the futility of our methods, and the necessity of finding a better. Our third interview, you may remember, was devoted to the consideration of the theory of extasis or vision, and the philosophical principles of interpretation. We admitted the possibility of man communicating with the spiritual world without the aid of the bodily senses ; it was proved to our satisfaction that he possessed the faculty of seeing and of feeling, as if out of his body, and in a state more or less freed from the influence of time and space. From the sibyls of antiquity down to Mlle. Lenormant ; from the gymnosophists of ancient India to the fakirs of modern India ; from the magi of the East to the Highlanders of Scotland, who possessed the faculty of second-sight ; lastly, from the prophets of antiquity down to the somnambulists and clairvoyants of our own days—so many persons have possessed this mode of perception, that it would argue the most narrow-minded obstinacy, or the most systematic and singular madness, to refuse to believe that St John possessed it also : above all, when he declares to us himself that all that he relates took place when he was in a state of vision. St John

therefore, we decided, was in a state of extasia, and when in this state of extasia, he saw the other world; for it is always what is immaterial or impalpable to our senses that is seen in that state.

MYSELF.—Allow me, in my turn, to perform the office of narrator, and to complete the account of this interview, in order to shew our friend that I understood and have remembered it. Although by this time convinced that the Apocalypse was the narrative of an extatic's sensations, we yet asked if it were not possible for the visionary to be led into error; for although it is certain that the prophets of the Bible have spoken nothing but the truth, yet it is publicly notorious that there are visionaries every day who do not tell the truth. We have only to read the history of the saints of Brittany, or the wild and irregular combats of the Scotch Covenanters, to be aware of the ridiculous part which visions have sometimes been made to perform. Our embarrassment, therefore, you will admit, was very natural. How, we said, are we to know what is true in the visions of St John, or what is error? But our friend the Officer gave us a criterion by which to judge of this. Truth and error are not beasts, dragons, or locusts, but are moral things. Make yourselves thoroughly acquainted therefore, he told us, with the theory of the good and the true, of evil and falsehood; apply this to the writings of St John; and if what he says agrees with this immutable standard, you will be certain that you are not deceived. In fact, the reasoning of theologians, who prove the doctrine of the Bible by the miracles, and the miracles by the doctrine, is not so unsound as Rousseau would have us to believe. The miracles prove that the thing is in its nature immaterial; while the doctrine, in its turn, demonstrates that the region of the immaterial world from which it proceeds is not that region in which falsehood reigns. If the other world is peopled with the souls of men, there must be both good and wicked there—those who are in the truth, and those who are in error; and if these spirits are in communication with this lower world by means of extasis, it is clear that on the one hand they inspire true thoughts and good sentiments, and, on the other, whisper falsehoods and incite to vicious passions. To assure ourselves, therefore, that St John was in communication with the good and pure portion of the spiritual world—or, in other words, with heaven—we did not content ourselves with ascertaining that the book was admitted into the canon of Scripture, but we compared it with the sublime doctrine of the good and the true, divided into three degrees; and I confess frankly, my friends, never before did I meet with anything so profound, or anything so exact. Finding that St John's revelations were in every respect in ac-

cordance with this theory, without ever varying from it in a single instance, we concluded that his book contained the truth. If this is not being guided by our reason, I do not know what we are to understand by the word. Our friend concluded his preliminary statement by proving that extatics, when seeing and feeling in the other world, necessarily *saw* that which they *felt*. They were struck by moral ideas ; and, as it is impossible to see abstractions, they saw images instead. It is impossible that this could have been otherwise. We were then presented with a sample of the extatic vocabulary, and on comparing the images employed by St John with those made use of before his days by the prophets of the Old Testament—extatics like himself—were convinced that there was nothing arbitrary in his expressions.

EUGENE.—Thus the Apocalypse was proved to us by its intrinsic evidence. In the first place, by a philosophic theory which was proof against all objections ; and secondly, by a system of interpretation which did not fail in a single instance from one end of the Bible to the other. If these are not convincing proofs, I do not know where to look for them. In the last place, our theory of degrees proved to us clearly that everything must have an End, a Cause, and an Effect ; and therefore, that those things seen by St John in the innermost, or cause state, must be manifested to our eyes in the extremes, or as effects. If the Love of Rule, and the Prostitution of Truth—if Barren Faith, and the refusal to recognise the moral precepts, have a real existence in the intellectual world, we must admit—we who are acquainted with the real working of nature—that these things, thus existing in their Principles, must also assume a Manifestation as the consequence of these principles. Thus, beholding in the two great communions which surround us the realisation of the two causes of the decline of all religion, we contented ourselves with declaring that the truths perceived by St John eighteen centuries before as Causes, have manifested themselves in the lapse of time as Effects. What can be conceived more natural and more agreeable to reason ? If there were no Romish Church, nor no Protestant doctrines, the Apocalypse would be merely a thing of air. It is only these two systems—not including, of course, in this category good and simple Christians, who do not trouble themselves about controverted points—which establish it on a firm basis ; and, so far from leading me to doubt its truth, they convert my mere belief into an article of faith. And now that we are all agreed, I yield the place to our instructor ; and we must beg of him to lay before us briefly the plan of the Apocalypse, without introducing the images which it contains.

THE OFFICER.—Our interviews followed each other much in

the same order in which we should consider this book. We rested where a pause was indicated ; and by degrees we grouped and arranged the spiritual facts there related. In our fourth interview we saw the Saviour appearing to St John, and in this vision we recognised something of that vague and shadowy nature which is, indeed, more or less applicable to all the phenomena of extasis ; but, at the same time, we admired the scrupulous correctness in the application of the terms used by extatics. By the mouth of his Apostle, the Lord then gives counsels full of wisdom to the universal Church which he had founded and put in possession of his revelation. In the classification of the Churches there mentioned, he has particularised each shade of religious faith and charity, so as to suit his advice to all. Passing from the present to the future, the Apostle afterwards sees this Church in its decline.

EUGENE.—And this decline has been only too apparent in the actual destinies of the Church. Almost from the origin of Christianity, we have seen the truth misunderstood or corrupted. In fact, the only really useful office which the great religious body appears to have fulfilled, was to preserve intact the Divine Word, and transmit it, in all its completeness, to later ages. This, moreover, is the same office which we saw the Jewish people perform ; they were unfaithful to God in every possible way, but they preserved his Word. This preservation of a book by nations who recognised nothing of its beauty or truth, is a most astonishing fact, especially if we remember that these same nations have destroyed so many other writings. The dealings of Providence towards men discloses most profound and admirable adaptations ; and Providence employed this degraded Christianity, as it did formerly the unfaithful Judaism, as a means of preserving the Word. It made use of these religions, although degraded, for this purpose, because they themselves would not make any more profitable use of the revelation intrusted to them.

THE OFFICER.—St John passes swiftly over all these errors, and comes to the period when Providence is about to put an end to them by the last judgment. To him there can be no interval between truth degraded and the same truth purified and restored. When the physician is called in to examine a disease, is it not in order that he should apply a remedy ? And after religion had thus fallen away from its primitive purity, St John necessarily saw its re-establishment. In this the Apocalypse agrees, as regards its plan, with all other prophetic books, as these everywhere at once announce and describe a judgment. Reasoning, therefore, by analogy, and according to the rules observed in this sort of composition, if indeed extasis can be said to be subject to any rule, the inspired prophet of Patmos could not see aught else but a judgment.

Consequently, in our fifth interview we saw that all heaven was prepared to pronounce this judgment. There were thrones and elders like those which judged in Israel, and symbolic animals, such as were employed by the prophets to describe Divine truths beneath the veil of an imperfect or degenerated organisation. We saw the mysterious book sealed with seven seals, and in it we at once recognised the Divine revelation—the only book, in fact, which tells us of our future destiny. No one could open this book but the Lamb, the emblem of the Redeemer; and we joined our voices with that unanimous chorus which sang the redemption of the human race, figured by the sacrifice of the Lamb without spot.

MYSELF.—Your *résumé* is so brief, and yet so correct, that I do not see room to add a single reflection, except that, as our fifth interview comprised two chapters of the Apocalypse, what you say respecting the thrones and the apparatus of the judgment forms the subject of the fourth chapter, and the opening of the book by the Lamb furnishes the matter of the fifth. Particularise the chapters of St John as you go on, if you please, that we may follow him better.

THE OFFICER.—At our sixth interview, we passed in review two other chapters, the sixth and seventh, which contain the scenes preparatory to the announcement of the judgment that is about to succeed. We followed the Apostle to the spiritual world, and there saw the apparatus of justice, and the appearance of him who was to pronounce it. Here the extatic necessarily feels the Divine influence, and describes the effects of this influence on the spiritual world, taken as a whole. The effects of this influence on the wicked forms the subject of the sixth chapter: we there perceive vitiated intellects characterised by horses of different colours, and riders distinguished by different attributes; we there see the shades flying from that influence which thwarts their vicious propensities, and concealing themselves in the secret recesses of their hearts, or covering themselves with the impure buckler of their pride. In the seventh chapter the scene changes, and the good are presented to us in the midst of their happiness. Everything then becomes peaceful in heaven, as in the heart of innocence. All the blessings, and all the truths, represented by the twelve tribes of Israel, appear to the extatic marked with the Divine seal. The immense multitude of those who have formed, not the head, but the great body of the Church, to whatsoever country or religion they may have belonged—in short, all those who have recognised a God, and have become regenerate by fleeing from evil and doing good, without any selfish motive—appear in this vast assembly of spirits. The tolerant Apostle tells us that the Lamb is their shepherd, and that he wipes away the tears from their eyes.

EUGENE.—There is great pleasure in reading the Apocalypse so easily. Up to this point there is nothing on which we are not all agreed. But we are coming to Faith Alone, after which we see the great Babylon ; and I confess plainly that I cannot, even yet, be so confident about this as I feel about all the rest.

MYSELF.—We have already rejected and adopted, by turns, these two points a dozen times. Let us, therefore, endeavour to get to the bottom of the subject now, in order that we may come to a decision in one way or other.

THE OFFICER.—From the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse to the sixteenth, inclusive, we find the account of a judgment pronounced upon certain people, in whom we cannot avoid seeing the characteristics of the False rather than the Bad. The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters contain the account of the judgment inflicted on another class of men, in whom, from the general sense of the emblems employed, we cannot help seeing that Evil predominates. The first lead the minds of men astray by their Errors ; the second aspire to Rule ; and from the days of St John till our own, when I examine to what two classes of men these characteristics may be truthfully applied, I can only find the partisans of the Reformation on the one hand, and of the Romish Church on the other. I conclude, therefore, very naturally and very consistently, as it seems to me, that from the eighth to the sixteenth chapters are described the Errors and Principles of the Reformation ; and that in the seventeenth and eighteenth are pictured the Tyrannical Domination of Rome, and its subsequent fall. The study of the human heart tells me that religion cannot become degraded in man except in these two ways ; whilst ancient ecclesiastical history proves to me that all religions have fallen from these two causes alone. Barren Faith and a Spirit of Domination are two vices of the mind. Now, what is mental belongs to the Innermost, or the Cause ; but this innermost, or cause, must sooner or later manifest itself in the Extremes, or the Effects. My opinion, therefore, merely amounts to this—that what has been already manifested in those religions which preceded Christianity, has existed also and has been manifested in open day, in it also. If this does not satisfy you, I really do not know what more to say. The names frighten you ; but this terror, which at all events is not likely to assist the arguments which I have just laid before you, should yield to the following consideration, which I think you will find it impossible to answer. I assert that these scenes represent the systems of the Reformation and of Rome. There is only one thing which can decide this point in dispute, and that is history : study it, and you will find it tells you nothing of these two systems which does not fully harmonise with what I have told you myself.

EUGENE.—It is a good test. These things exist at once in theory and in fact, and the study of the human heart proves that they have existed in all ages. The Bible gives us additional evidence of this in the history of those people, who, enlightened like ourselves, destroyed this light as we have done. Lastly, the history of our own time proves to us the existence of two great political and moral associations in all points conformable to those of antiquity; and yet these words, Roman Catholic and Protestant, are still distasteful to us. Is not this because the thing in itself concerns the individual rather than the masses? The study of the human heart, you admitted, demonstrates the existence of these two modes of religious decline; consequently there are in the breast of every man the seeds of Barren Faith and Babylonish Domination. St John has really done nothing more than pourtray the history of man.

THE OFFICER.—Each man must necessarily find within himself the confirmation of everything which concerns mankind at large. The moral universe is a grand whole, formed of an innumerable quantity of smaller parts. The whole is reflected in the fractional part, and the fractional part, in its turn, possesses all the qualities which make up the whole. It follows from this, that the Divine influence is not confined to an individual, nor to the society of which this individual forms a part. It extends to every world; it embraces creation in its universal extent. If the future, which still conceals the secrets of this influence, is unfolded to the eyes of the extatic, he must, like God himself, see the isolated individual following the same phases as the society of which he forms a part, and the latter, in its turn, modified and acted on like the single individual. This exact parallel between a unit and the aggregation of units, proves to a demonstration that what happens to the one happens to the other also. Thus Barren Faith and Babylon have their germ in every individual, I admit; but for this same reason they have their germ also in societies, since the latter possess all the characteristics of the former. In each man, considered by himself, these germs assume the form of Opinions, often perhaps unperceived; in society they are converted into Institutions. Now the Apocalypse is not a narrative of opinions—unmanifested, without existence—but plainly the picture of religious institutions. This cannot be denied, without falling into the most absurd contradictions.

MYSELF.—In fact, if we look on it as the history of the individual man, we must have recourse everywhere to an elaborate and rather fantastic allegory. In this way, the four horses we saw would be four contrary inclinations; the twelve tribes of Israel twelve faculties, which must be distinguished from the twenty-four elders mentioned elsewhere; the four

animals must also find a place in our moral nature ; in short, the whole Apocalyptic drama must take place, as it were, within each of us, and I confess that at the bare idea my brain swims. If, on the contrary, I consider these as things seen by an extatic in a world containing multitudes of spirits of all sorts, I apply to one class of these a particular form, and to others a form different from the first. In short, I adopt your idea, my friend ; but yet I should like to know why I do not feel the same conviction when I attempt to personify Geneva and Rome in the beasts of the Apocalypse.

THE OFFICER.—The sole cause of this hesitation, my dear friend, arises from the fact, that it is not the design of God that your moral liberty should be destroyed by proofs which would force you to believe. This moral liberty—the noblest attribute of man—is ever carefully preserved by the Deity in all those relations which he permits us to have with him. He does not wish that we should believe, without having at the same time the liberty of rejecting. He leaves us free to believe or not to believe ; and this doubt, of which you imprudently wish to get rid, is precisely that which distinguishes you as a reasoning creature. If you should succeed in forcing yourself to believe what revolts your understanding, you would become brutified, and, as it were, deprived of the exercise of your intellect. This quietism leads to stupidity. You have the faculty of doubting even after sufficient evidence is presented to you, in order that your union with truth may be ever full and entire. On every occasion doubt is there ready to return, because on every occasion God wishes that you should be free to reject or adopt that which he presents to your mind. The legitimate use of your reason, therefore, is not to enable you to say : “ I am now convinced—I shall never doubt again ; ” you might as well say : “ I shall never think again ; I am freed from my intellect, as from some troublesome burden.” It is the will of God, my friends, that you should struggle against doubt freely, and without sacrificing your reason to religion. He wishes that you should yourselves lay the matter in dispute before the tribunal of your intellect, in order that the latter may give the final award. If you entertain superstitious scruples about the danger of not believing, and adopt, at all hazards, whatever absurdity is told you, your understanding will still reject it. You must leave aside these scruples. God is not offended at your examining and searching, when you are guided by a sincere wish for the truth. You must therefore take time to consider the obstacle which deters you ; you must ask yourself if there is no place for it in your intellect. Thus, you will at first receive it as an opinion, and when further search has confirmed you in this opinion, love will be added, and it will perhaps become faith. It is

only in this way that you can come, like myself, to believe in truths which never prostrate the understanding, but, on the contrary, nourish and strengthen it.

EUGENE.—Your theory is the most satisfactory I have ever heard. One cause of my uncertainty, I must confess, arose from my thinking I was compelled to believe; and I was even tempted to rebel against this tyranny, which sought to stifle my understanding. But as you do not attempt to force your interpretation upon my belief, I feel once more at my ease. You break the bonds which confined me, and when this is done, my understanding will perhaps seek to unite them again of its own accord. Your explanation will probably appear to me in the first place ingenious, afterwards probable, and from that I may come to look on it as exact and real. When I have reached this point, my conviction will be my own work, and will thenceforth take its place in my mind as an article of faith.

MYSELF.—There are two stumbling-blocks, gentlemen, in our path—that superstition which adopts everything without permitting itself to reflect, and that extreme independence of mind which revolts against every truth which thwarts or annoys it; the one is stupidity—the other is madness. Your theory of moral liberty in matters of examination saves us from these two dangers, without leaving us in an undecided middle course; and permits us to act with regard to your interpretation, as with all other systems, which we receive and adopt only after preliminary examination. On the other side, it preserves us from that libertine career of the mind which, misconstruing all truth, contradicts the universal testimony to the fact that such a thing as truth exists, and that the duty of man is to recognise it as such, and voluntarily to submit to it. Now, to submit one's-self is an act of liberty; to be subjected forcibly is not so. In this way I myself receive the beasts of the Apocalypse as the probable expression, in the extatic language, of the two truths degraded by the religious world. The good and the true, the evil and the false, have their principles and their form above; the two falsities which I perceive around me must consequently have had their existence, and their manifestations also, in the spiritual world, and St John may well have seen them there. I believe, therefore, in this point theoretically, and this theoretical belief may afterwards come to be a living and practical belief. I believe in it as I do in everything which I have learned from you—that is to say, reserving to myself the right of altering my opinion on further evidence, if that evidence should seem to me strong and well-grounded. I cannot believe that God will exact more than this at our hands. Since we are the artificers of our own fate, and since we are in good or evil, in

truth or falsehood, in proportion as we approach to or retire from Him, our moral opinions, like our actions, must be our own work.

ECCESE.—Most true. As we render ourselves unhappy by our own misdeeds, so we plunge ourselves in darkness by our own errors; we make ourselves what we are, both in what relates to our Will, and in what relates to our Understanding. It is our duty, therefore, to take a calm and rational view of the beasts of the Apocalypse, without being embarrassed by any superstitious dread of offending God by those opinions. God is no more offended by defects in our judgment, than he is angry with our evil inclinations. These expressions are merely metaphorical. From supreme love and truth there can proceed nothing but the good and true. If we do not receive these, we remove ourselves from God; it is not he who rejects us from his bosom. I can now see in the Apocalypse the foreshadowing of the doctrines of the Reformation and of Rome, without being haunted by a superstitious fear of profaning the Divine Word by this application of it. This long interruption was necessary in order that we might understand each other. The seven first chapters contain merely the preparation for the judgment, and from the eighth to the sixteenth we saw the worthless fruits of the understanding, when limiting itself merely to a barren faith. I am quite willing to look on the matter in this point of view.

THE OFFICER.—You see plainly that this examination and judgment have reference only to one and the same religious society. In fact, the judgment pronounced upon it commences with the sound of the seven trumpets, which declare what are the errors it contains. It ends by the woes poured out of the seven vials, which manifest plainly the consequences of those vices that were previously proclaimed. Passing in review all these chapters, one after the other, we see that the eighth commences by the description of the nature and effects of the Spiritual Influence—the sole means of rendering manifest the error which is opposed to it. This influence is presented to us under the delightful image of a perfume of peace and love ascending to heaven; but on earth, which is given up to error, causing nothing but disputes. At the sound of the first trumpet, this dew of heaven descends upon those unhappy creatures, who feel it like a hail-shower. The second, which ought to raise the creature towards his Creator, presents us only with the image of the proud, who, like a towering mountain, raise themselves aloft on the pedestal of their own greatness, and fall into the ocean of conflicting opinions, in which all doctrines perish. The star, the symbol of celestial knowledge, changing its signification when taken in communication with men devoid of under-

standing, becomes the emblem of human errors, so bitter in their results. Lastly, in the same chapter we see the darkness of the intellect figured by that which is produced by the darkening of the heavenly bodies; and we are thus irresistibly led to the conclusion that the subject here refers to persons plunged in mental darkness and illusion. The ninth chapter sets forth under two monstrous images—the locusts and the horses with heads of lions—the results of those errors of the understanding which have become fully confirmed. When the entire rule of conduct has been reduced to faith alone, the intellect is rendered lifeless; it is altogether banished from the domain of the spiritual world, and believes in nothing but what can be felt and seen. Those in whom this operation takes place, become sensual in the lowest degree, a fact expressed by the emblem of the locusts, which defile the herbage and devour the harvest. Even in this state of barren faith, however, there is still a monitor left in our ordinary reason, which prevents us from converting the monstrous creations of our minds into realities. When this curb is broken, then takes place something like the hideous spectacle presented by the Euphrates breaking its bounds. Our understanding, shaking off the curb of reason, gives birth to a multitude of fantastic conceptions, which are expressed most strikingly by that Apocalyptic cavalry, as ridiculous in their equipments as it is fatal by their serpent's sting.

MYSELF.—This is exactly the idea left on my mind by our seventh interview, which was altogether devoted to the consideration of these two chapters.

THE OFFICER.—The two which follow are the development of the same idea. Those who hold the doctrine of barren faith, practically deny the Absolute Divinity of Christ, since they address themselves to the Father; and reject the Decalogue as a Divine law obligatory on all Christians. Christ appears then to the extatic with all the attributes of the only God, and holding in his hand an open book, the testimony of the truth. This book, which is the holy Scripture, proves everywhere the identity of the Jehovah with Jesus.

EUGENE.—Everywhere, indeed, to him who reads it with profit, but most unmistakably, at least, in the Gospel according to St John; and this is the essential point for us. The extatic could not bear any different testimony in the Apocalypse from that which he had already borne in his Gospel.

THE OFFICER.—These two fundamental Truths, without which there can be no Christianity, are personified in the eleventh chapter, and represented to St John's eyes as two Witnesses, denied, outraged, and abandoned by false Christians. This strange scene bears all the evidence of truth. In both the Old and New Testaments, no one but Jesus Christ is

called the Witness, and nothing but the Decalogue bears that name. These, then, the two real bases of all revealed religion, are denied and abandoned during the entire existence of a Church in which barren faith reigns triumphant, and until the commencement of that which is to succeed it.

MYSELF.—It is in this way, in fact, that we are to understand those singular expressions which recur so often; I mean three times and a half, expressed in years, in months, and in days. I have never met with anything which bears a more striking appearance of truth.

THE OFFICER.—The truths rejected by the fallen Church being thus clearly indicated to St John, he sees in the twelfth chapter the infernal Falsity—the Being, the very Essence of the doctrine we are speaking of—presented under the form of a Dragon. He sees at the same time the Divine Truth which is to succeed to those errors, under the form of a Woman travelling with child, and pursued by this dragon. It is clear that along with the representation of the good, he must see the evil which is combating it. The history and nature of this monster is presented to him at the same time in an episodic picture, and he recognises it as that old serpent which was subdued by the Archangel Michael—plainly signifying that evil and falsehood are the same in all ages. After this vision, which may be almost termed transparent, so easily is the spiritual sense read through the letter, St John perceives those spirits which have been seduced by the dragon. After the appearance of Evil—a being quite distinct from him who allows this evil to take possession of him—the Apostle naturally sees those who profess the impious doctrine which he has characterised in all its minute shades. He sees the individuals belonging to the Church under two representations very usually employed by the ancients; I mean that of the people, or the body who receives instruction, and that of the clergy, or the body who teaches. In this way these two monsters are as natural as all the personifications of nations and towns which are so often employed in every-day language.

EGENE.—We are not in the least surprised to see the exoteric in this place characterise two great religious corporations under the figure of two collective beings. Every day, our artists represent nations and towns under the images of men and women. This does not puzzle us in the least; and what justifies St John's choice is that the two collective beings represented by him have exactly the characteristics of the people and the clergy. In fact, the first being possesses simply the attributes of popular power: it has horns with crowns; it blasphemes, as if repeating what the dragon told it. The second speaks like the dragon itself; it gives life to, and makes the image of the first being speak. It is impossible better to

describe that body which brands its mark on the right hand and on the forehead of every one it instructs.

THE OFFICER.—In the three chapters which follow, and which are the last of this section, we are still employed in the examination of Barren Faith. In the fourteenth, the Lamb again appears, announcing the last catastrophe which is preparing. The Lord himself succeeds to this emblem, and reaps the harvest of all generations. The angel, in his turn, thrusts in his sickle into the Church, whose judgment has commenced; and as Faith, and not Charity, is here spoken of, it is the Vintage which follows, instead of the Harvest. The vintage produces blood—the emblem of truth corrupted—in great abundance; and the horses, which are emblems of the intellect, swim up to the bridles in the frightful liquor which flows from the great wine-press. The seven vials, which are about to complete the manifestation of the Evil and the False in the men of this Church, appear in the sixteenth chapter. Before coming to this however, the extatic, in a shorter chapter, brings before us two songs—that of Moses and that of the Lamb. We have little difficulty in recognising in these the Law of the twelve tables and the Gospel—the latter affording proofs of the Divine Humanity, and the former those Precepts of Life which lead to heaven. The seven vials, as we have remarked, enumerate, with few exceptions, the same plagues which are indicated by the trumpets. This scene completes the drama which had reference to the doctrines of the Reformation.

MYSELF.—We have thus eight chapters devoted to this subject. I should like to take a general view of them.

THE OFFICER.—It is easily done; they are as follows, in their order:—

1st, The sound of the seven trumpets comprehends the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters, with their various manifestations.

2d, The view of Evil and the Two Bodies who adopt and personify it, occupies the 12th and 13th chapters.

3d, The picture of the Church as grapes trampled in a wine-press, is the subject of the 14th.

4th, Lastly, the announcement, and the pouring out of the seven vials, is found in the 15th and 16th chapters.

So that in all these chapters there is only the announcement and the representation of Falsehood—the manner in which the Vintage of it is reaped, and the true Perception of it manifested.

MYSELF.—That is very well; but when I compare these eight chapters with the rest of the work, I find that they occupy a much greater proportion of it than would seem due to them, particularly as other portions require, one would

naturally think, to be treated more in detail. For example, the fall of the Church termed Babylon occupies but two chapters, and yet she has been, and is still, of much greater importance in the political world than Protestantism, which is spread only over a fraction of society.

EUGENE.—What matters this disproportion, if, in the two chapters which are devoted to her, Babylon is described to the life, and so as to shew that nothing has been forgotten ! It would be singular presumption to attempt to subject the work of an extatic to our conventional rules of composition. The visionary describes what he sees ; and who can tell whether St John may not have seen more radical vices, with their concomitant circumstances, in that one of the two communions which you imagine the least !

THE OFFICER.—Connected with this subject, there is one reflection which I am sure will strike you. Protestantism, although appearing so late as the sixteenth century, only gave, as it were, a local habitation and a name to erroneous opinions which had taken their rise in the Church as early as the third century. In fact, as every one knows, it only revived what appeared to have sunk into oblivion. There is not a single error in the Reformed Church which was not adopted and widely diffused before her day by all the Christian sectaries, beginning with the Gnostics of the first centuries ; so that when we speak of faith alone, and religion without works, we comprehend in that designation all those who ever proclaimed these two monstrous doctrines in Christendom. In this point of view, you see that eight chapters may very justly be devoted to the consideration of a doctrine which might almost be termed universal ; and looking on the matter in this light, the great Babylonish doctrine itself, far from having included in its bosom the great majority of Christians, has really numbered only the least part—a fact which it would not be difficult to prove on going into details. It required, therefore, a greater scope to characterise a doctrine so widely spread, and to point out the more varied shades of opinion which it contained.

EUGENE.—This remark of yours leads us to look at the Reformation in a very different light. In this way, it embraces almost the whole of Christianity. In fact, from Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ, to the Gnostics, who scrupled about performing good works with a view to salvation, all those Christian sects belonged more or less to the Reformation. In a word, these separatists, from the Romish Church protested publicly against her doctrines in the sixteenth century, when Luther carried his famous revolution into effect ; but long before this public act of disobedience, the Reformation existed, in fact, in the human mind. In this way I have

no difficulty in believing, with you, that in the eight chapters we are examining, St John really saw those to whom we have since given the name of Protestants, for ecclesiastical history proves this beyond the slightest doubt.

MYSELF.—I join with you, my dear Eugene, and shall endeavour to abstract my mind from the particular epoch in which Luther and Calvin lived, and take a more general view of all those which preceded it; no longer confining my attention to a little corner of Germany, but embracing in a comprehensive view the whole history of the Church in all countries—from the burning climate of Persia, in which Manichæism took its rise, to the foggy shores of England, where the Pelagian doctrines have spread so widely. To all those, in these wide-spread and various lands, who deny Saving Works and the Sole Divinity of the Saviour, I apply these eight chapters, which certainly would require some straining to fit them to the little Teutonic Reformation of the sixteenth century. In the locusts of the seventeenth chapter, I see a striking figure of those sensual errors which history ascribes to several coarse and degraded sects of Gnostics, who had sunk from their original pretensions, and become unworthy of their name. In the horsemen which issued from the Euphrates, I behold an emblem of those ridiculous scholastic disputes which at first gave rise to several semi-political sects, but ended by introducing wide-spread disorders in the Church. I can understand that the chapter in which the book is given to St John to eat refers to all the states of the fallen Church, in which the Truth became so bitter a draught, since amongst the entire number of reigning sects there is not one to whom this speaking emblem will not apply. I look upon the two witnesses lying dead in the public place of Sodom as the two fundamental testimonies or doctrines of Christianity, rejected and abandoned by a perverse and ignorant age. Lastly, I behold everywhere, from the third century of the Church to the present day, those two beasts, one of whom gives the other life, causing it to utter blasphemies, and stifle within it that intelligent principle which it cannot, nevertheless, wholly lay aside. This is my view of the head that was wounded as if to death, and was healed of its wound. It is plainly an emblem of the great mass of the community, led astray by a dogma, but who, although acknowledging it with their lips, are constrained by their instinctive good sense to act in contradiction to it.

EUGENE.—Thus, my dear friend, almost all the obstacles in our path are removed. The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters are plainly a picture of the fall of that Church which, like ancient Babel, has employed holy things as a pretext for earthly Tyranny. The close analogy which exists between

the expressions used by St John when speaking of this Church, and those employed by the prophets who wrote of the ancient Babel and Babylon, even putting aside the similarity of the names, places the matter with me almost beyond dispute. It is impossible not to see the Romish Church using the Word of God as a pretext for its own designs, in this woman who is seated on the scarlet-coloured beast. The garments of purple and scarlet of this woman, and the ornaments of all kinds which she is described as wearing, are to me striking emblems of that outward appearance of holiness which she has ever made pretension to.

THE OFFICER.—Observe, I entreat you, the principal characteristic of the doctrine represented here by St John, and you can judge afterwards if the portrait is a resemblance. On her forehead is written “mystery.” We have agreed that this mystery is the secret motive which guides her—a motive springing from her ruling passion, and unknown out of her own limits—the essence of which is a desire to Rule over everything by means of religion. In fact, the Romish Pontiff has arrogated to himself a sacrilegious power over the souls of men; and in claiming to bind and loose, in this world as well as in the other—in establishing a scrutiny over the very thoughts, and an inquisition over the actions—in asserting his inheritance of a vicarship, by means of which he has placed his foot upon the necks of kings—he attributes to himself that which belongs to God alone. Lastly, he has reserved to himself the sole interpretation of the Divine Word, which, in the Romish doctrine, may be said literally at once to exist and not to exist. The Babylonish Sovereignty therefore has, at least in pretension, extended its sway over heaven and earth, over God and Scripture. What more does it require to fix on it the title of the great prostitute of the Apocalypse?

MYSELF.—To me, at least, it is more evident even than the seven hills on which the city of Rome is built.

THE OFFICER.—You agree with me too, I hope, in thinking the picture of that schism which separated Christianity into two hostile camps a striking one, and that you see plainly from history who are those who have rendered Babylon naked and desolate, and who have eaten her flesh. Alas! all this is only too evidently realised in the present day. The details of her desolation, which are set forth in the eighteenth chapter, are expressed in that emblematic language, the correctness of which you are not now inclined to dispute. It is impossible for you not to recognise a spiritual doctrine as typified by all these symbolical characters, which we have seen were formerly applied by the Jewish prophets to the Hebrew Church. The merchants, and their merchandises, are an easily understood allegory; and the mere enumeration of all these emblems is,

in my eyes, not the least striking trait of the picture. In studying their meaning, it is impossible not to see that they express all the shades of Goodness and Truth corrupted and destroyed.

EUGENE.—Impossible, also, not to exclaim with St John : Come out of Babylon, my people. In fact, the voices of the bridegroom and bride will never more be heard there. At the close of these two chapters, and as a necessary sequence of them, follow those which describe the final judgment. In fact, as the Good and True have ceased to exist, their last agony must necessarily assume a form in the eyes of the extatic. The final scene must have presented itself to his view in the spiritual world, precisely because the things represented ceased on earth. When this consummation of all errors is ended, truth must again appear, just as, when the clouds have passed away, the sun again diffuses his life-giving beams. Therefore in the heavenly Jerusalem we are presented with the truest and most undoubted emblem of a doctrine of truth substituted for one of error.

MYSELF.—To my eyes, these four last chapters contain a philosophical meaning at once most simple and most profound. The two first clearly establish the fact that the destruction of the material world is a mere chimera, and that the sacred writer could only have meant to describe the end of a Church. The two others prove to demonstration that the expectation of a mysterious city, either in heaven or on the earth, is altogether without foundation, and that we must look on the New Jerusalem of St John as a new doctrine, descending from heaven, like everything good and perfect, and assuming a form in this world, in order to unite man to his Creator. Viewed in this light, the New Jerusalem presents no difficulty, and should meet with the assent of every thinking mind, even were there no proofs of its truth furnished by our theory, and by the spiritual meaning of Scripture. If our commentary were only adopted, we should see no more Millenarians, no more fanatic devotees, looking for a general resurrection in flesh and blood—no more superstitious hope of seeing God appearing literally in the clouds of heaven. It is enough to see him shine forth in the clouds of that Word which he hath bequeathed to us, and which, henceforth, in disclosing to us its spiritual meaning—a meaning which is susceptible of the most rigorous demonstration—will bring the conviction to our minds that the last promises of the Bible have been fulfilled.

EUGENE.—I cannot see how it is possible to form any other opinion of the Apocalypse than the one we have arrived at, supported as it is by historic facts, by a well-founded philosophic theory, by the spiritual sense of Scripture, as well as by that sound common sense which is the birthright of us all.

It bears all the marks of truth which we could desire. It only required a supernatural, or rather immaterial testimony to convert our belief into certainty, and this you have given us. But before saying a few words on this last point, will you have the goodness to draw up a little table, or general view, of your system of the Apocalypse, and shew us how the chapters of the book correspond with your principal divisions of the subject? In this manner we shall obtain a comprehensive view at a glance.

THE OFFICER.—Most willingly. We have seen that there are seven principal subjects treated of in the Apocalypse: I shall put these down in their order, and beneath each, those chapters which are devoted to the consideration of them:—

I.	II.	III.
Counsels given to the Churches.	Apparatus of the Judgment.	Preliminary Scenes, or Primary Effects of the Divine Influence.
Chapters i. ii. and iii.	Chapters iv. and v.	Chapters vi. and vii.
IV.	V.	
Judgment pronounced upon Faith without Works.	Judgment pronounced on Babylon.	
Chapters viii. ix. x. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. xv. and xvi.	Chapters xvii. and xviii.	
VI.	VII.	
Execution of the Judgment.	Announcement of the New Jerusalem.	
Chapters xix. and xx	Chapters xxi. and xxii.	

With the assistance of this table, you will be able to recognise in the drama of St John a commencement and an end. There is a fixed and regular order observed, with which caprice has nothing to do; and you cannot deny—unless you also deny the light of the sun—that it contains, like all the prophecies of the Old Testament, the announcement of the corruption of a Church, the description of its fall, and the prediction of that which must necessarily succeed it.

EUGENE.—Let us briefly examine these seven divisions. The first indicates clearly enough, by the counsels given to the Universal Church, that the intention of St John is to treat only of those things which concern a Church. Of this there can be no possible doubt. The second, in describing the apparatus of a judgment, demonstrates that this judgment will concern those only who have received the light of revelation, whether they have neglected and corrupted, or whether they have practised it. Jesus Christ, represented by the Lamb, opens a book, and what book can this be if not that from which the Church has drawn its life? There being no spiritual life to an extatic outside the Church, so out of it there

can be no examination of the False or the True. This is also decisive. The third division, in describing the different manner in which the Divine Influence is received by the two parties, shews who are those who have remained faithful to Truth and Goodness, and who are those who have departed from them. It is only when treating of a Church that such a distinction can be drawn. The fourth section of the subject contains the enumeration of Falsities of all descriptions, described under the same emblems which are employed to denote them in these passages of the Old Testament which treat of the Church. Consequently the subject is still those Errors which have reference to the Church and to the Revealed Word, whether this latter be received or rejected. St John is ever consistent to his plan. The fifth division presents to our view a Corrupted Doctrine, under the emblem of a City, similar in name and attributes to that which was employed by the prophets of the old law to designate a similar corruption of holy things. I am therefore forced to conclude that this is a Church, and not an earthly city. To interpret the Babylon of the Apocalypse in this latter sense, would be as puzzling as it would be unnecessary, and would present a striking anomaly to the rest of the plan. We are therefore irresistibly led to consider the fall of Babylon as typical of the fall of a Church. The sixth division, by the emblems which it contains, indicates plainly the appearance of the Saviour, who comes to accomplish that which he had promised, in judging the good and evil, and separating the tares from the wheat—proving clearly that it was the last period of the Church which St John beheld. The singular expression, “second death,” which occurs frequently here, shews that spiritual condemnation is what is meant; and none can be subject to this but those who have been previously made acquainted with the Divine precepts. The most searching scrutiny can come to no other conclusion respecting this last judgment. Considered as the end of the world, it would be a palpable absurdity; but if looked upon as the end of a Church, nothing can be more rational. The seventh and last division, under the emblem of a City, really announces the appearance of a new Doctrine. Jerusalem is the usual emblem employed in Scriptural phraseology to designate the doctrine of the Church. The New Jerusalem, therefore, can be nothing else but the doctrine of a New Church. As St John describes the corrupted Church under the emblems of towns, like those of Sodom and Babylon, he is only consistent in designating the renewed and remodelled Church under the clear and intelligible title of a New Jerusalem. In fact, the Apocalypse describes, first, the Church being founded, then corrupted in two different ways, afterwards rejected by Him who established it, and, lastly, renewed and restored to its primitive purity.

THE OFFICER.—And remark, I entreat, that of the three explanatory systems with which you are acquainted, ours is the only one which is consistent and harmonious from beginning to end. Dupuis, who looks on the Apocalypse as the symbolical representation of the phenomena of the material creation, is obliged to admit that the counsels given to the seven Churches are referable solely to mysticism ; while, from the fifth to the twelfth chapters, the images, he says, bear no analogy to those of the celestial chart, and appear to him to have been invented merely to terrify the imagination. The two chapters which relate to Babylon, are in his opinion an allegorical representation of the sublunary world, the abode of misery, as contrasted with heaven, the abode of peace and happiness. Those chapters, again, which describe the last judgment have no connection, he thinks, with the constellations, but are plagiarisms borrowed from philosophy ; while, lastly, the New Jerusalem, according to him, owes its origin to the mystical ideas of Oriental theology. If you adopt his views, you will look on the Apocalypse as partly referring to the celestial chart, partly the result of caprice, and partly founded on Oriental tradition. Bossuet, on the contrary, looks on the commencement as referring to the judgment pronounced upon the Jews—a system of interpretation which seems to infer that the inspired author only repeated that sentence of condemnation which had already been pronounced by the Saviour ; but afterwards, the learned commentator explains all the images as applicable to the dissolution and ruin of a Temporal Power. Lastly, that portion which treats of the final judgment—namely, the nineteenth and twentieth chapters—appears to him to refer to the destruction of material nature ; while the New Jerusalem is merely a picture of heaven. Thus, according to him, the Apocalypse treats, in the first place, of a Church which was already judged, and of which it could not have been St John's intention to speak ; then of a temporal power, which never was treated of in any sacred book whatever ; next, of the destruction of material nature, an idea which the Bible and sound reason equally reject ; and, lastly, of an order of things impossible to be carried out on earth, and which the Deity, therefore, never could have intended to establish here. We alone, my friends, everywhere see the development of the same idea, while no other commentary has enlisted on its side the testimony of universal tradition. I cannot think, after such an analysis, that any candid inquirer can have the least doubt about the meaning and general design of the Apocalypse.

MYSELF.—Nothing can be more just. But another question arose to view afterwards—viz., When were these predictions fulfilled ? We agreed that the answer to this question de-

pends a good deal on the way in which each person looks on the progress of human events. One party, whose attention has been directed to the degradations and corruptions pointed out, will see clearly that the Apocalypse has been accomplished. Others, not accustomed thus to observe or judge, will never be in a state to compare the event with the prediction. For them the New Jerusalem will be established without their being aware of it. To expect that the entire universe will bestow the same attention on the subject, and assign the same date to the event, would be the extreme of stupidity. We agreed, therefore, to leave the question an open one. The last condition we required was, that we should have, in addition, the testimony of a trustworthy witness, who saw in his own time the fulfilment of those things which were predicted by St John. That Swedenborg's testimony consists of visions does not terrify me; for, as a guarantee that his revelations are true, I have the sanction of the philosophic theory which he propounds—a theory which will bear the strictest examination—and the key which he furnishes to the spiritual meaning of Scripture. I cannot, therefore, entertain the slightest doubt with respect to the nature of his supernatural or immaterial perceptions. They do not come from the devil, for the devil does not teach the True and the Good, he does not inspire a profound respect for the Scriptures, and does not establish the sole worship of Jesus Christ. I believe in the description of the spiritual world as seen by St John, because Swedenborg proves to me that its nature and economy are in accordance with the revelations of other extatics, with common sense, and with Scripture. I cannot separate these three proofs from each other—they are mutually corroborative. I merely wish to ask for a few explanations with respect to one point. You assert that extasis enables us to see the future as if it were present—that must be admitted. Yet I do not see clearly how this can be explained. You say that for the thoughts there is no time. This is also true; but, although my thoughts can look backwards on the past, I cannot understand so clearly how they can perceive a future which is not yet in existence.

THE OFFICER.—It is not yet in existence for you, but it is so in reality for a being whose horizon is wider than yours. If you stand on the banks of a river, your eye beholds the waves which roll past you, but those which will roll past an hour later are as completely hidden from you as if they did not exist. They do exist, however, and a man placed on an adjoining hill will see them clearly. He whose eye embraces the entire course of the river, will see that portion which you will not perceive till long afterwards. Now the course of

God's providence may be compared to that of a river. The extent of view is the only thing in which the prophet differs from the ordinary man—one is limited to earth, the other embraces heaven also. All that the one perceives is bounded by the narrow limits of space and time; the other passes these two boundaries, and can see the future as the present, according to the intensity of his spiritual perception.

MYSELF.—Thus St John beheld the whole history of the Church, as a man placed upon the summit of a lofty mountain beholds the entire course of a river. Humanity, considered without reference to time or space, presents a progression of effects as easily perceived by the thoughts as the windings of a river are by the eye. I think I can understand this. As the seed is, so will be the tree. I can behold a lofty oak in the minute seed, and can read the history of the tree from the moment I see this seed confided to the earth. A being whose vision was more limited than mine would look on the seed as one thing, the sapling as another, and the full-grown tree as a third: he would never dream that these three things were only one. To me, the divisions of time represented by these three stages of progress make only one period; to him, they would seem perfectly separate, without any communication between them. The view belonging to the immaterial, is wider than that belonging to the natural, world—that is the whole mystery; or, in other words, a spirit can see farther than a man. And is not this most reasonable? The lower animals do not see in the same way that man does; and superior intellects may very well be supposed to look on a vast extent of duration as connected and contiguous, whilst weaker and more limited minds, circumscribed in their little sphere, will only behold portions of this extent as separate and unconnected existences.

EDGENE.—Natural history makes us acquainted with insects who live but one day, and who consequently cannot know by experience that there is light and darkness in the twenty-four hours. The sun appears to them fixed in the heavens while they gaze at it, if indeed insects do gaze at the sun. If a being of a superior order were to tell them that this orb rises on one side of the heavens, crosses the meridian, and sets on the side opposite to that on which it rose, doubtless they could not believe his assertion. To them it would appear a prediction, while to their instructor it would be simply a more extended view. We are like those insects. Seeing the sun high in the heavens, we say that this is his everlasting place. My little children, we may suppose St John to say, this Orb, which you imagine is stationary, will soon descend to the horizon. It rose, radiant with light, before you commenced

your earthly existence ; it advanced by degrees to the point at which you see it ; its movement still continues ; and I can even now inform you when it will set.

MYSELF.—And if St John be on the mountain, whilst we poor insects are in a muddy ditch, he may also say : This sun, my children, is about to be obscured ; I see, from this, clouds which you do not see, and which will soon pass over its blazing disc. But these clouds may pass without the insects perceiving it, occupied as they are with their microscopic labours ; and to them the prediction will seem as the effect of dotage. Ah, my friends, I can now form a juster opinion of St John and his readers. All the difference between them is the extent of their view, and in the more or less complete separation from those sensual passions which ever blind and enfeeble poor humanity.

EUGENE.—None but the Spirit of God can know what God is. Before we can know what spiritual life is, we must first experience it. There is no possibility of forming a precise idea of anything which we do not ourselves feel. Spiritual life exists—that ought to suffice us. It manifests this existence unmistakably, although imperceptibly to our earthly senses ; that, too, is beyond a doubt. We may thus admit that the manner in which St John was affected is real and true, and that it was quite possible for him to see things which are not presented to our view. I see in history the realisation on earth of all the Apocalyptic events ; and in studying the causes of these events, I am led to believe in the prophetic view of them by a man in a state of spiritual existence. The visions of St John no longer present any difficulty to me, either in their principle or in their details.

MYSELF.—I am quite of your opinion. I believe in visions as mental phenomena. I believe in the predictions made when in this state of vision as historical facts. Whatever changes may take place in human affairs, whatever distinctive appellations they may receive, I shall ever look upon it as demonstrated that there have existed two principal bodies in the Christian world, and that these bodies have sunk to decay. It is equally evident to me that a New Spirit is diffused abroad through mankind, rising, as it were, on the ruins of the two doctrines professed by these expiring Communions. These Communions may indeed retain their former names, and may even fancy themselves still living ; but their present state gives the lie to this assertion. Whilst still bearing the same names, they proclaim their own decease ; or, if they do cling to their old ideas, these are dead and powerless in their hands. In a word, the old Christianity is extinct, and a new Christianity, long since announced to mankind, is dawning on the world.

THE OFFICER.—This, my friends, is the only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn from the Apoccalypse. It is most remarkable, that what we whisper in our closet is proclaimed openly on the house-tops. There is only one cry of astonishment from all sides at the sight of the New Era. The past has ceased to call forth any sympathetic echo in the breast of man; even the most circumspect, and the greatest enemies of innovation, dare not venture to resuscitate the past as it was. They do certainly long for the past, but it is the past with modifications. Well, my friends, these modifications are themselves a new era. The New Jerusalem may indeed be rejected in name, but it is welcomed in fact. Never can our enemies and detractors—if, indeed, we have enemies—extricate themselves from this dilemma. You have now been made acquainted with the truth; it is for you not to hide your light under a bushel. Lay before those philosophers who are anxious to make a circumspect choice amongst the different doctrines of the day, the absolute theory of the Good and the True. Place in the hands of those really anxious and inquiring men who are studying the Bible without reaping from it either solace or advantage, the key to the prophetic emblems. You have in your possession all that is best calculated to enlighten the reason and strengthen the heart; share it with your brethren. In so doing, you will have accomplished your task. As for me, mine is over. I have communicated to you what I know. The torch which has expired in my hands will be held aloft by you when I shall be no more. This is the sole destiny of man upon the earth. God has given him a command to bequeath to those coming after him that moral light which has been confided to his care.

EUGENE.—I shall be ever ready to impart the interpretation which I have adopted to all sincere men who have the patience to listen to me. Even to the atheist himself I should not hesitate to urge that extasis, if not in itself the truth, is at least the hypothesis that explains everything. He will tell me, most probably, that visions are mere folly. Be it so, I reply. These follies, however, have existed; you cannot, at all events, deny that. There have been extacies in all ages—the Holy Scriptures were written by such. It is to this means, therefore, that we must have recourse if we wish to understand the language made use of by them. This point once admitted, he will behold a mental world open before him, the existence of which he never before even suspected. After this, an acquaintance with the theory of the Good and the True will afford him the best guarantee of the correctness of this explanatory method; and what was at first adopted by him as hypothesis, will ultimately be converted into certainty.

MYSELF.—Our theory, like truth, is great, and will prevail.

We unite into one comprehensive Whole the traditions of every age and every people. Aided by our discoveries, the learned may reconstruct the ancient world by means of the scattered elements of the primitive revelation. Fable finds here its *Œdipus*, the celestial chart its interpreter. We explain the meaning of those monstrous forms engraved on the monuments of antiquity, and which have hitherto been considered as inexplicable hieroglyphics. We go back to the real source of metaphorical language ; we give a complete vocabulary of the sacred tongue—a vocabulary, until the present day, totally unknown. In unveiling our prophetic enigmas, we disclose to view a true religion and true morality—the sacred tie which binds together God, man, and the universe ; in short, a rational explanation of those mysterious bonds which unite the two worlds together. If this is not a sublime science, if this is not the true food of the heart and mind, I do not know where it is to be found. This, my friends, is universal, absolute truth—the only standard by which we can truly estimate the errors and the progress of the human mind. That book, which I formerly attempted to compose by the feeble and vacillating light of reason, I shall begin again, aided by the revelations of extatics ; and in so doing, I feel sure of ultimately leading mankind to adopt our doctrine.

THE OFFICER.—You are both, my dear friends, much more occupied with your own interests than with the general interests of truth. It would be a great error on your part to believe that as soon as you produce your proofs, they will be received without hesitation. Many will place much more confidence in their clergyman than in you ; many others will attach more weight to the opinion of the Press and the learned, who never speak of the Apocalypse but with a sneer, and look on all who attempt to explain it as fools. In expressing with the warmth of enthusiastic conviction these truths with which you are filled, you may very probably excite only contempt—even persecution. Choose your auditors carefully, then. Do not offer the truth to those who are not yet fitted to receive it ; if so, they will only turn again and rend you. There are those who imagine that the truth cannot fail to have been perceived by councils and universities, and that one man cannot be right when opposed to so many learned and illustrious personages. It is in vain that you say to them : “ Read, only read, what I advance, and compare it with what your illustrious personages have said ; an attentive study of the matter will at once decide it.” But short-sighted men do not view things in this plain and unadorned manner. They look at those who proclaim these opinions ; they take into account the outward dignities, the honours, the places, and the pensions of your opponents ; and if they can reckon up

ten thousand puppets, covered with tinsel and embroidery, as hostile to the system upheld by one open-hearted and upright man, they will think it as possible to pluck the moon from her sphere as that the opinions of this man can be true.

EUGENE.—Our friend is altogether right; let us enjoy the truth in peace, and let us not expose it to the outrages of those who have rendered themselves incapable of receiving it in the natural way. Let us intrust it to those who are worthy, and time will do the rest. It is a rare talent that of knowing how to preserve moderation when believing that you possess the truth, for all are not disposed to welcome it. You must learn, then, to choose your time and place, as the husbandman chooses favourable seasons for his operations. It will not do to sow in the dog-days, nor to intrust the truth to a heart burning with self-love. The poor seed would soon be consumed.

MYSELF.—For my part, I cannot be so patient. I prefer to consign the truth to the pages of my book, and then intrust it to the shelves of a library, from which Providence sooner or later will draw it forth, if He judges suitable. The Apocalypse has been buried for seventeen centuries, without finding a reader worthy of it, and my book may well remain dormant for the same length of time, if it is the will of God. I do not murmur; I resign myself beforehand.

THE END.